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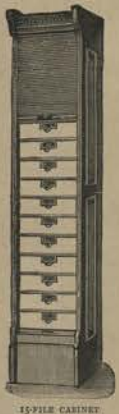

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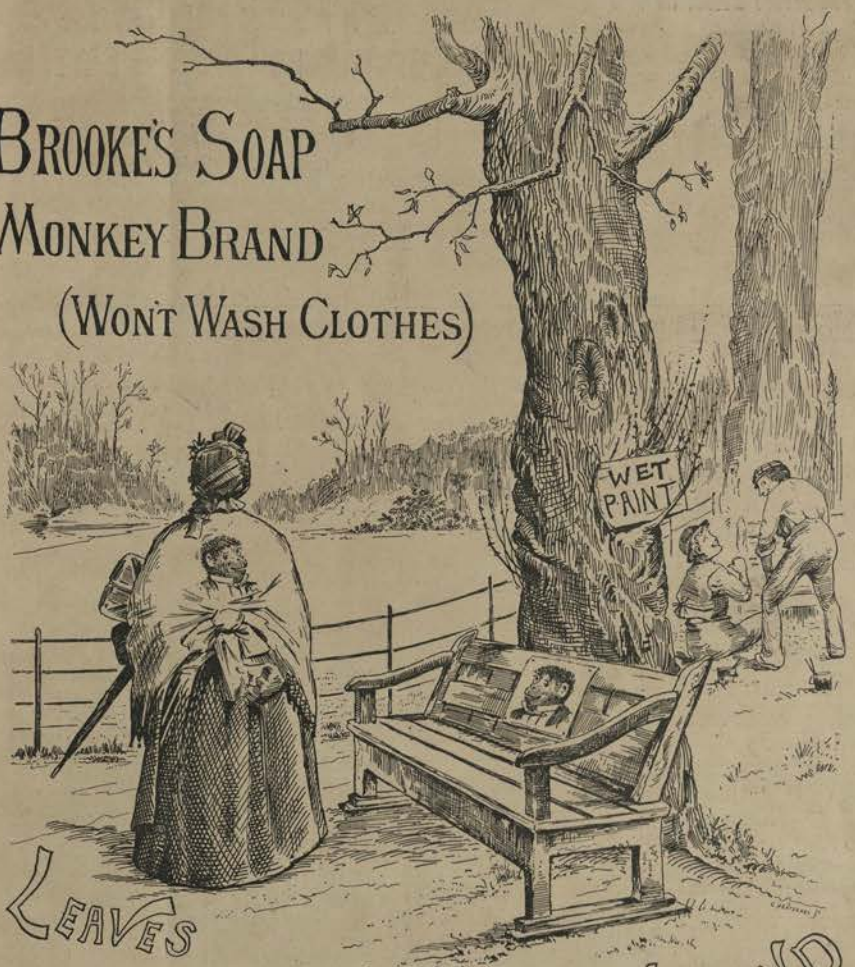

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MRS. OLIPHANT

CHAPTER I.

THE LITTLE PRINCESS

IN THE YEAR 1819 the Royal Family of England was not in a happy or prosperous state. Seldom before or since has there been less comfort in the prospects of the House of Hanover. King George III. was in seclusion, bowed down with incurable disease; and of all his large family, fifteen sons and daughters, most of whom were still living at that period, not one had a successor to come after them, a legitimate heir to the Crown. It is needless to enter into any description of the state of things which had caused this. The sons of the reigning House, when they loved at all, had not loved as they ought. Wilful young sons, brought up in a house which, though virtuous, was dull, by arbitrary parents making little allowance for youthful fancy, they had either plunged into dissipation, or had fixed their choice upon unroyal ladies who could not be received as their lawful wives, possible mothers of a future Sovereign; and for twenty years the sole hope of the Royal House had been the Princess Charlotte, the only child of a most unhappy marriage, but in herself a sweet and promising young woman, with many claims upon the tenderness and sympathy of the nation. So long as she lived all national requirements were satisfied on the point of heirship. She married wisely and happily, not only making an admirable choice for herself, but bringing forward unawares out of the obscurity of princely life in Germany, and from amid a crowd of petty princes equally distinguished and undistinguished, a family which has held a greater place since in the affairs of Christendom than perhaps any other, the family of Saxe-Coburg Gotha. Prince Leopold, the husband thus chosen, was the first to show the family faculty of combining the quietest and most unostentatious private life with great devotion to public affairs, and that political penetration and sagacity which make a statesman, as much as an eye for form and colour make an artist; and everything bade fair for the happiest Royal life that England perhaps had ever known. The historical student, looking on after those events, might well pronounce this brief chapter to hold the place of a sketch for a great picture—as if the Mighty Architect of the world had tried the combination first in a momentary episode, before touching the larger, more permanent canvas. As Victoria and Albert were a generation later, so were Charlotte and Leopold in 1817—a good, true, honest, and noble-minded pair, setting up a pure household, a high standard of life, in the midst of the careless England of those days, in which dissipation was more wild, and vice more undisguised, than now. The spectacle of conscientious Royalty working hard at its noble occupation, without ambitious thought or desire either for aggrandisement or added splendour in its own person, was something new to the world; too fine an experiment, perhaps, to be worked out all at once. But in little more than a year the essay

By Geo. Hayter

PRINCESS OF HOHENLOHE-LANGENBURG (HALF-SISTER TO THE QUEEN) AND HER DAUGHTER, PRINCESS ADELAIDE, AFTERWARDS PRINCESS OF SCHLEWIG-HOLSTEIN

ended, the young household was broken up, and all these beautiful hopes were at an end. Princess Charlotte died, and the Royal House found itself childless. There were still many brothers, it is true, but they were beyond their prime, and all unmarried except the two eldest, who had no surviving children. The situation was a startling one, all the more for being so unexpected; for the happy marriage of the Princess Charlotte seemed to have settled matters in the most satisfactory way. Within a few months of her death, however, several marriages took place in the Royal Family, the most important of which was that of the Duke of Kent, the fourth son of George III., who married a sister of Prince Leopold, the Princess of Leiningen, a young widow with two children, in the month of May, 1818. Of this marriage was born Victoria, the happiest, most stainless, and most popular of English Queens, against whom no sedition has ever risen, nor evil whisper ever been breathed, whom her severest critics would stand for to the death as stoutly as her dearest friends; and who could at any time of her long reign, from her accession, even when crowns were falling around her, and all the demons of revolution raging, have passed unattended from end to end of her country, secure of nothing but universal homage, and honour, and loyalty, and devotion. It is doubtful whether as much could be said of any other Monarch who has ever reigned.

The Princess Victoria was born within the homely brick walls of Kensington Palace on May 24th, 1819. She alone of the little group of Royal children born in that year was English by actual birth. The present Duke of Cambridge and the late ex-King of Hanover were both born in Germany, and so was a hapless baby who would have stood first among them had she lived, a little daughter of the Duke of Clarence, who was next in succession to the throne. It would seem that Providence had decided that England was certainly to have a Queen, for the children of King William IV., too, were all girls. These children, however, all died, and though it was by no means sure at the time of Princess Victoria's birth that she would be the future Queen, yet she came first in her generation, though with many possibilities against her. For it was not unlikely that George IV. might marry again on the death of his unacknowledged Queen, whom he hated; and, as a matter of fact, several children were born to the Duke of Clarence—afterwards William IV.—after the birth of the Princess Victoria. There was, however, sufficient probability of her succession to fill the minds of all belonging to her with a thrill of excitement beyond that which greets every new-born child, when the little Princess came into the world. In the letter of her mother's mother, the old Duchess of Saxe-Coburg—written on hearing of the event—this sentiment is very apparent:—"Again a Charlotte," she writes, "destined, perhaps, to play a great part one day, if a brother is not born to take it out of her hands. The English like queens." No happier augury could be said over the cradle of a sovereign, and nothing more true. The English have cause to like queens, for England has never been greater, more famous, or more full of genius than when her monarchs were women. And though George III., with his domestic virtues, had been a popular king, he was the only one of his race who had any pretensions to this name. The House of Hanover had not been beloved. It wanted a woman to conciliate and charm the heart of the nation, and to call forth that chivalry which is so good an auxiliary of loyalty. Princess Charlotte had

KENSINGTON PALACE—WHERE QUEEN VICTORIA WAS BORN, MAY 24TH, 1819

TB-6-6

H.R.H. THE DUCHESS OF KENT—MOTHER OF H.M. QUEEN VICTORIA
From the Picture by G. Dawe, R.A.

already done something. She had made herself dear and sacred, if by nothing else, by her death. The country had mourned for her as for the child of its hopes. And now, again, here was hope in its purest, fortunate shape—re-born.

The Princess Victoria's training, however, was very different from the irregular, unhappy education of her unfortunate cousin and predecessor. Except those splendid prospects, there was nothing happy in the external circumstances among which her life began. When she was only a few months old her father died, closely followed by his father—poor old King George, whose life for some time past had been of little value to himself or any one. Before this, it is recorded that "the Regent was not kind to his brother," and when the Duke of Kent died it was found that "the poor Duke had left his family deprived of all means of existence." Thus the position of the mother of the future Sovereign—a young German princess, so soon left alone in this strange and not always very genial country—was far from consoling. Her brother, Prince Leopold, hastened to her in her distress, and stood by her in all her future difficulties. Few women have had a severer piece of work to undertake. But for that wise and kind brother, the Duchess of Kent, though the mother of the future Queen, was all but unfriended in a home with which she had as yet but little time to get acquainted. She was a foreigner, accustomed to different ways of living, and had not even the easy elasticity of youth which accustoms itself to anything, for she was already over thirty when she married the Duke. And while scrimping so great a position she was comparatively poor. Had she withdrawn with her child to her own country, to bring the little Princess up among her own people, cheaply and kindly—far away from the criticisms and extravagances, the late hours and bustle of English life—who could have wondered? But the Duchess had the temperate Coburg blood in her veins, and shared the sound sense and judgment of her race. She never forgot that her eight-months'-old baby was the first Princess of the Blood, English above all things, and imperatively requiring an English education. And she began her long career of self-denial by steadily remaining in England, though far from her friends and everything that was most dear to her. The little family, bereaved, returned to the old Palace at Kensington, where the child had been born, and there the early days of the Princess were chiefly spent. More happy than most children in her position, the little Heiress of England had the society of an elder sister, whose superior age must, in those innocent days, have neutralised the immense difference of position, and given something of the sweet natural humility of a younger child in a well-regulated household to this most important member of the family, all unconscious of her own greatness. This sister, Princess Feodora, afterwards Princess Hohenlohe, was the tenderest of friends and companions to the Queen during her whole life. They were brought up together in quiet old Kensington, and in the sweeter solitude of Claremont, the house where Prince Leopold had spent his short married life, which belonged to him, and in which he often received his widowed sister and her little girl. They were there in the summer of 1824, and so bright must that summer have been that its brightness still lasts in recollection, though the little Princess was but five years old. "Those days of Claremont," the Queen herself tells us, "were the happiest days of her childhood."

In this quiet routine, retired from all the observation and bustle of London, in that domestic peace which affords a certain compensation to such imperfect households for the loss, with the husband and father, of all the noisier parts of life, the most careful education was given to the Royal child. In no other kind of home are the children so entirely the centre of life as in that of a tender mother who is a widow. It does not require the superior importance of a future royalty to secure this concentration of all interests in one; but here there was every inducement, public and private, to make the mental and moral training of the little Princess the first object of all surrounding her. Over this training Prince Leopold watched, with all the interest of a statesman, and all the tenderness of a father. He introduced less disturbance than a father would have done, for all his own larger life was apart from the gentle household; but he was more than most fathers, and took the largest view of the trust thus confided to his hands; and all that the kindest and most watchful care could do he did for his sister and her precious charge. Already, too, other visions of the future were dawning before the far-seeing eyes of the man who, with the sincerest desire for the welfare of England, and a longing, no doubt, made all the stronger by the melancholy failure of his personal hopes to give to the country which had received him so kindly, a noble Sovereign—had, at the same time, a natural wish to advance his own family, worthy by constitution and character as it had already proved itself. Another child standing to him in exactly the same relationship as the little Victoria had been born just after her, in the Ducal Court at Saxe-Coburg, in the cheerful country house of the Rosenau, a child occupying exactly the same position to which he had been himself born, as the little Princess did that of his young wife so early lost. What wonder if the heart of the statesman Prince, still sore from that wound, pleased itself with the thought of another union which should carry out all his abortive hopes? While the children were still in their cradles this idea seems to have communicated itself to all about them. The family were in constant communication, the young mothers exchanging their pleasant experiences and bits of nursery news, as mothers will do as long as the species lasts. All the doings and growings of "the little Maydlower," as the Princess was called by the kind German kindfolk, were recorded with fond simplicity for the satisfaction of the old grandmother at home. The good German nurse, who passed from one house to another as her services were wanted, "could not sufficiently describe what a dear little love" the baby at Kensington was, and the baby of the Rosenau had the enthusiastic pen of his mother to do him full justice. Albert was of extraordinary beauty, this impartial historian declared. "He had great blue eyes, dimples on each cheek, three teeth, and at eight months old was already beginning to walk." Great news! enough to make the other nursery thrill with emulation as these notes were compared. What a compensation lies in this sweet bubble of children, for women's ears at least! for both the poor ladies who wrote had troubles enough: the one in England had to hold her own with modest courage in face of the criticism and doubtful friendliness of a whole foreign society, in face of poverty and loneliness; the other was on the brink of a separation from home and children altogether. A dark background full of human trouble and

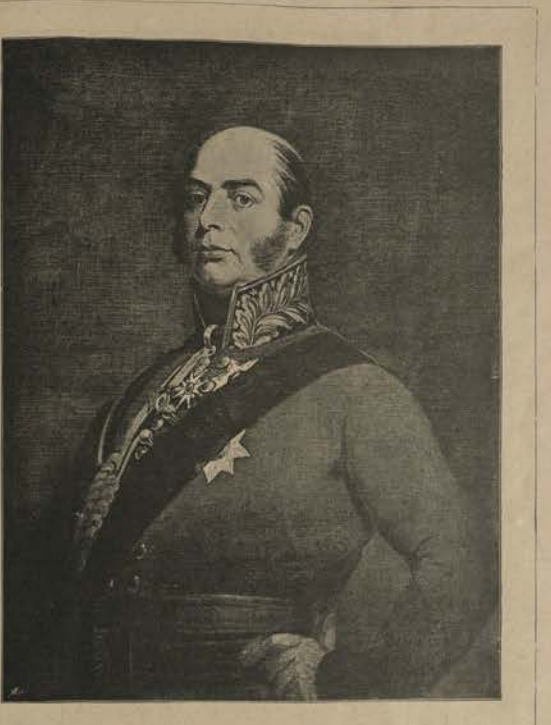
sorrow comes behind the two angelical heads, that look out wondering, with blue eyes wide open, at the spectator. But could anything be more charming and touching than this baby pair?

Naturally there are but few records of this early period left. The Queen's own amused recollection when she first takes travelling with her another little Princess Victoria, her eldest child, and sees herself once more bowing to the spectators in baby state from the window of the carriage, is almost all the little twinkle of reminiscence which we have. "It put me so in mind of myself when I was the little Princess," she says, with the frank simplicity which has made Her Majesty's friendly confidences to her people so popular. Still, however, though an ever-growing interest accompanied the little Princess wherever she went, her position was not assured. There still existed in the background behind the little figure, yet threatening to eclipse her, the shadow of another family in which things did not go so well with the children. When the Duchess of Clarence, afterwards Queen Adelaide, lost her second daughter, she wrote to her sister-in-law in words of the most touching resignation. "My children are dead," said the poor lady, "but yours lives, and she is mine, too!" So many griefs, so many dyings went to make the throned estate and great fortune of the little Victoria. Her industrious fate, all innocent and fearless, the same face which had come down from generation to generation through all the line of Brunswick, was the first young countenance for many years upon which there was no shade.

A few years later, when she was nine years old, Sir Walter Scott records in his diary that he had dined with the Duchess of Kent, and had been presented by Prince Leopold "to the little Princess Victoria—the Heir-Apparent to the House as things now stand. This little lady," he adds, "is educated with much care, and watched so closely that no busy maid has a moment to whisper, 'You are the Heir of England.' I suspect, if we could dissect the little heart, we should find that some pigeon or other bird of the air had carried the matter. She is fair, like the Royal Family." So Walter's idea, however, had at little foundation in fact as such surmises often have. The little Princess mother at that time nor for years after knew anything of her pre-eminence. She was brought up with the strictest economy and regularity, as children of much lower position rarely are, and was taught at an early age to restrain her expenditure within the limits of her income, even when that income was but a child's pocket-money. Miss Martineau, an authority not likely to err in the way of enthusiasm, gives us, in her sketch of the Duchess of Kent, an anecdote current at the time, which illustrates the carefulness of the training better than it does the abstract statement which precedes it, that the Princess "was reared in as much honesty and care about money matters as any citizen's child." Very few citizens' children, we believe, ever were or could be so rigidly guarded from an extra shilling of expenditure. "It became known at Tunbridge Wells that the Princess had been unable to buy a box at the Bazaar because she had spent her money. At this Bazaar she had bought presents for almost all her relations, and had laid out her last shilling, when she remembered one cousin more, and saw a box priced half-a-crown which would suit him. The shop people, of course, placed the box with the other purchases, but the little lady's governess admonished them by saying, 'No; you see the Princess has not got the money, therefore, of course, she cannot buy the box.' This being perceived, the next offer was to lay by the box till it could be purchased; and the answer was, 'Oh, well, if you will be so good as to do that.' On quarter day, before seven in the morning, the Princess appeared on her donkey to claim her purchase." This reads like a story out of Sandford and Merton. But the Princess Victoria came by her father's side of a lavish and largely spending race, and no doubt on this account the discipline under which she was trained became more severe.

A much prettier story, and one of the authenticity of which there can be no doubt, gives a description of the way in which her future rank was revealed to her. No one had been allowed, as is mentioned above, to breathe a word of this in the child's ear. But events now began to happen which changed her position to a certain extent. King George IV. died, which brought the Princess a step nearer to the Throne, and it was no longer likely that King William could have children to succeed him. Thus the child of Kensington Palace became beyond all doubt the next in succession, with only an old man of sixty-five, in indifferent health, between her and the Throne. And she herself was only twelve, and her nearest English relative was not of a character to reassure her friends. In these circumstances, a Bill was brought into Parliament to make the Duchess of Kent Regent in case her daughter should be called upon to ascend the Throne before she came of age. When these public precautions were taken, it was thought necessary to inform the little girl herself of her true position—that she was not merely one of a band of Princes and Princesses, the younger members of the family, but the first among them—the future Head of the Race. She was in the midst of her daily lessons, somewhat surprised, it would seem, at the grave work required from her, which was not expected from the other Princesses, when this great intimation was made to her. The story is told in a letter from her governess, the Baroness Lehzen, to the Queen, writt n in 1854, and apparently recalling to her the incidents of her youth:—

"I ask your Majesty's leave to cite some remarkable words of your Majesty when only twelve years old, while the Regency Bill was in progress. I then said to the Duchess of Kent that now for the first time your Majesty ought to know your place in the Succession. Her Royal Highness agreed with me, and I put the genealogical table into the historical book. When Mr. Davys (the Queen's Instructor, afterwards Bishop of Peterborough) was gone, the Princess Victoria opened the book again as usual, and seeing the additional paper, said, 'I never saw that before.' 'It was not thought necessary you should, Princess,' I answered. 'I see I am nearer the throne than I thought.' 'So it is, Madam,' I said. After some moments the Princess resumed:—'How many a child would boast, but they don't know the difficulty. There is much splendour, but there is much responsibility.' The Princess, having lifted up the forefinger of her right hand while she spoke, gave me that little hand, saying, 'I will be good. I understand now why you urged me so much to learn even Latin. My cousins



H.R.H. THE DUKE OF KENT—FATHER OF H.M. QUEEN VICTORIA
From the Picture in the possession of H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge

THE SOUTH SIDE

LOOKING NORTH THROUGH THE BALLROOM

VIEWS AT CLAREMONT

Where Her Majesty spent the happiest days of her childhood

THE PRINCESS VICTORIA AT THE AGE OF TWO, AND THE DUCHESS OF KENT
From the painting by Sir W. Beechey, now in Windsor Castle

Augusta and Mary never did; but you told me Latin is the foundation of English grammar and of all the elegant expressions, and I learned it as you wished it; but I understand all better now." And the little Princess gave me her hand, repeating, "I will be good."

It is seldom that a little scene like this stands out so distinctly in the early story even of a life destined to greatness. The hush of awe upon the child, the childish application of this great secret to the abstruse study of Latin which was not required from the others, the immediate resolution—so simple, yet containing all the wisest sage might have counselled or the greatest hero vowed—"I will be good," make a perfect little picture. It is the clearest appearance of the future Queen in her own person that we get through the soft obscurity of those childish years. The same hand which placed itself so solemnly in the anxious guardian's hand to give weight to the simple vow, inscribed long after, in full maturity, a few words of recollection upon the margin of this narrative. "I cried much on hearing it," writes the Queen. No further words are needed to enhance the effect of the touching scene.

After this wonderful revelation the schoolroom routine began again, the lessons were learned, the happy monotony of the child's existence was resumed. All was as modest, as retired, as quiet as ever. The little Heiress of England was not permitted to take part in the pageant of her uncle's accession, or brought forward too soon into the glare of day. After this date the course of her education widened, and she was made acquainted with various features of her own country, making a series of visits and expeditions throughout England, to many of the most interesting towns, cathedrals, and other remarkable places. And wherever the little maiden went, as was natural, she was the centre of attraction. A creature so young and so highly placed, with already the shadow of a crown upon her, drew all eyes, and gave a charm of sympathetic nature which ennobled it to the ordinary curiosity of the crowd. Something kinder than curiosity, a feeling more warm and genial than the vulgar love of a spectacle, drew guests out upon her path wherever she moved. And there her wise mother accustomed her unconsciously to the multitude of eyes that were to watch her every movement, and to the often wearisome, if sometimes exciting, details of a public life. There does not seem any appearance that in her early days the Queen showed any of that distaste for public observation which is the greatest reproach that has ever been made against her in later life. Difficulties of all kinds, however, as was natural, beset her young path. Her position was infinitely more delicate and critical than had she been the daughter of the reigning Sovereign, holding a natural place in his family. The revelations of the late Mr. Greville, questionable as they are both in good taste and social fidelity, show painfully enough some of the early troubles to which the Princess, and especially her mother was exposed. The King took due offence at the wise restraint under which the young Princess was brought up, and so far forgot what was due to a lady and his guest, as to upbraid the Duchess of Kent, at his own table, for keeping her young daughter as much as she could out of the unwholesome air of the Court. When we read of this scene, of the Queen's confusion, and the Princess's tears, and the painful family squabble revealed to all the gossiping, whispering world, we can realise better what difficulties must have been in the way of such a serious education, and such a seclusion from courtiers, flatterers, and royal bad manners as made the Princess Victoria when she came to the throne the admiration of all who surrounded her. Evidently, to her conscientious mother and guardian, the charge of conducting her young mind safe and spotless through all these dirty paths to the great elevation which awaited her, was onerous enough to enable her to hear all things, and follow steadily the course chalked out, whatever angry King or impertinent critic could say.

On the other hand, while the Duchess was blamed for keeping the young Princess out of the buzz of the Court, she was equally blamed for the little expeditions, so profitable to all parties, by which the young lady was made acquainted with her country, was taught to serve and love it, so far as the modesty of her girlhood permitted, to her future people. Almost every heir or heiress who is not the son or daughter of the previous possessor of the inheritance is liable to the same jealous watch and unreliable fault-finding. Her mother kept her child from all vulgar contact with the crowd; it was a "rigorous seclusion." She took her to see a beautiful cathedral or historical house. It was an attempt at a Royal progress. Thus it was the critics contradicted each other. And in the mean time Kensington Palace held its own with a firmness not less remarkable than the purity and gravity of the aims which were there pursued. The system of travel and intercourse with the world which has been so largely adopted in the training of our present Princes had not then struck the public mind as desirable, and the Princess Victoria never left England, notwithstanding the crowd of kind relations whom she possessed in Germany, and the interest which that country must have had to her as her mother's birthplace, and as the home of the cousin of whom she had heard so much, and in one of whom she was soon to have so close an interest.

Since the publication of the Prince Consort's life, the story of the young Princess in her early years becomes doubly rich and interesting. A double existence has been set before us in this book. The interests of the Crown of England were scarcely more considered in Kensington than they were in Coburg, where, from his earliest youth, the boy Albert was trained to help and strengthen the girl Victoria in the great work that lay before her. The Prince was much more free to go and come, to mix with different classes, to learn and acquire experience among men, than his future bride could be. He was more precious than though he himself had occupied the great position of Heir to England. He could move about the world unencumbered by pomp, unattended by observation; and over him as over his cousin the wise supervision of his uncle was extended. So long as they were both children, nothing further could come of it, but it is very interesting now to note how entirely in both the cradles the two were trained to form one.

In the mean time the Princess advanced towards womanhood, in an atmosphere as nearly resembling the wholesome quiet and seclusion in which childhood is ordinarily allowed to develop as was possible—and amid those natural relationships which make life sweet in all ranks and at all ages. Her rank forbade that entirely unrestrained quiet which is most favourable for the growth of the human faculties, but at least this sweet obscurity was preserved as far as might be, and the inevitable exposure to the public gaze was tempered by tender companionship, and by the consciousness of duty, the best means of neutralising all necessary evil.

A GATEWAY OF KENSINGTON PALACE

CHAPTER II.

THE YOUNG QUEEN

IT is considered generally that such topics as love and marriage are not subjects to be discussed with young people, and consequently most of us acquire all knowledge on such matters from poetry and romance, which place them in front of all human affairs. But the usual reserve with which parents treat this subject in England is impossible on that exceptional level of life occupied by a Queen, with whom all rules of courtship are reversed, and to whom it is essential to make her own choice, and signify her own pleasure in so important a matter, a circumstance which makes the slippery path of youth exceptionally difficult for a young Princess so splendidly, yet painfully, put aside by her great fortunes from the shelter of the common custom and gracious use and wont of life. When the Princess Victoria was seventeen, developing into womanhood, and the moment evidently approached at which she must assume the Crown, it became time to bring together the two who had been so carefully trained for each other. Whether any suspicion had yet reached the Princess's mind of this family hope we are not informed, but the young Prince could not be entirely ignorant that his fate hung in the balance when, in the month of May, 1836, a handsome and comely-gifted boy of seventeen, he came with his father and brother—with no fear of the event, but much of the sea and the terrible crossing which lay between them and England—to pay a visit to the aunt and cousin whom he had never seen. With what excitement and suspense the elder people must have watched this first encounter! The young people were of the same age, agreeable and attractive in looks, two blue-eyed human creatures, looking their great life frankly in the face, as hopeful, as unclouded, as became their years. What the Princess was will be seen from the youthful portrait with which by this time even those who remember it of old must have grown unfamiliar, losing the fair, young, candid countenance in the matured face so familiar to us. What Prince Albert was is described by Baron Stockmar in a letter written on the eve of this eventful meeting to the anxious uncle, King Leopold, whose long-cherished plans were now to be put to the test:—

"Albert is a fine young fellow, well-grown for his age, with agreeable and valuable qualities, and who, if things go well, may in a few years turn out a strong, handsome man, of a kindly, simple, yet dignified demeanour. Externally, therefore, he possesses all that pleases the sex, and at all times, and in all countries, must please."

This was the external aspect of the youth; his mind, a more inscrutable subject, was largely discussed between the wise and interested counsellors, who hoped to see in him the model Prince, the typical man, at once hero and sage, who should carry out all their hopes. But even to these penetrating statesmen the mind of seventeen was inscrutable, and could be regarded only with hope not certainty. What will almost be more interesting to the general reader is that the boy that coming to our shores, with so many plans on his head, was merry and light-hearted, as became his age, full of youthful laughter as well as youthful wisdom, and as capable of keeping his fellow-students in a roar of genial fun as of winning the approbation of the elders who were bent on fathoming the deepest secrets of his being. There is so much gravity in the story that the mirth is doubly welcome when we hear of it, and, no doubt, was quite as much in the young man's favour as his well-developed figure and fine features. The Duke of Saxe-Coburg and his sons arrived at Kensington Palace in the end of May, and there is no record of the meeting except in the brief letters of the Prince, published in his Memoir, which give few details. His aunt and cousin were "very kind" and "most amiable." This is all the modest boy discloses, and probably there was not much more to tell. The world had its suspicions that something more was meant than met the eye when the young cousins were brought together, but no gleam of consciousness shows itself in the kind, simple letters. They had known each other all their lives, though they had never met before, and ordinary life has plenty of examples of the pleasant familiarity, yet strangeness, of such intercourse. The father and sons stayed some weeks in London, and were at Ascot, and Court dinners, and concerts, long prolonged, during which the young visitor had many "hard battles to fight against sleepiness," so young was he, and so untried in fashionable dissipations. On one evening,

H.M. QUEEN VICTORIA AT THE AGE OF TEN
From the picture by Wm. Fowler

at least, there was "a brilliant ball at Kensington Palace," at which the young Germans, unused to such late hours, remained till four o'clock in the morning. The curious reader would like to know how often the cousins dined together, and if such felt the charm and attraction of the other, amid all the music and the mirth. There were stories going, of which we remember to have heard some echo, of flowers bestowed, and looks exchanged, the gossip of the ball-room, but these are not things likely to be specified in letters to the mother at home.

When the Prince left England, however, anxious King Leopold, who was still, as always, watching over everything, broke the silence and wrote to his niece. The Princess replied warmly, with a frankness which must have made the heart of her careful and anxious guardian rejoice—entreating her uncle to take into his special protection, "one now so dear to me." What a relief this must have been to the mind of the wise King all who are aware of the perverseness of youthful inclinations, and their readiness to direct themselves in unauthorised directions and refuse the best way, will readily believe.

This, however, was not revealed to the world, nor even, it would seem, to the chief person concerned, who, vaguely linked in hope and fancy to the pretty cousin of whom all his attendants had spoke to him all his life, thought of her still as he went forth upon his travels, sending her such a token of remembrance as an Alpine rose gathered on the Rigi, a book of prints to show his route from time to time; very natural simple tokens of the delicate amity ripening into warmer emotion, such as pass every day between youth and maiden on the verge of love.

This simple record, however, is soon interrupted by an event which looks all the more great and overwhelming from these simple surroundings. There was great din and bustle of contending political parties at the time when William IV. was taken by his death illness. No struggle of great principles or great measures, no Reform Bill or other large public commotion in the way; but the still more absorbing, though much less worthy, conflict of parties, embittered by the fact that the King had ranged himself on the Opposition side, an unconstitutional proceeding which has scarcely ever taken place since. All this made her Accession more difficult to the young creature who was his successor. The present writer remembers as one of the first public incidents that caught her childish eye the broad black borders of the newspapers which announced King William's death. Princess Victoria was then eighteen, the age at which Royal personages attain their majority, as there was happily no question of a Regency. The King died during the night, and it is said that the official intimation was made to the Duchess of Kent and her daughter next morning before five o'clock, the news having been expected for some days. The account of the proceedings that followed, and the demeanour of the young Queen, we take from the celebrated "Journal" of Mr. C. C. F. Greville, a book so full of posthumous indiscretions that its praise may be accepted fully as sincere. "The King died at twenty minutes after two yesterday morning, and the young Queen met the Council at Kensington Palace at eleven. Never was anything like the first impression she produced, or the chorus of praise and admiration which it raised about her manner and behaviour, and certainly not without justice. It was very extraordinary, and certainly something far beyond what was looked for. Her youth and inexperience, and the ignorance of the world concerning her, naturally excited intense curiosity to see how she would act on this trying occasion, and there was a considerable assemblage at the Palace, notwithstanding the short notice that was given. The first thing to be done was to teach her her lesson, which for this purpose Melbourne had himself to learn. I gave him the Council papers, and explained all that was to be done, and he went and explained all this to her. He asked, too, if she would enter the room, accompanied by the great officers of State, but she said she would come in alone. When the Lords were assembled the Lord President informed them of the King's death, and suggested as they were so numerous that a few of them should repair to the presence of the Queen, and inform her of the event, and that their lordships were assembled in consequence; and accordingly the two Royal Dukes, the two Archbishops, the Chancellor, and Melbourne went with him. The Queen received them in the adjoining room alone. As soon as they had returned the proclamation was read, and the usual order passed, when the doors were thrown open, and the Queen entered, accompanied by her two uncles, who advanced to meet her. She bowed to the Lords, took her seat, and then read her Speech in a clear, distinct, and audible voice, and without any appearance of fear or embarrassment. She was quite plainly dressed, and in mourning. After she had read her Speech, and taken and signed the oath for the security of the Church of Scotland, the Privy Councillors were sworn, the two Royal Dukes first by themselves—and as these two old men, her uncles, knelt before her swearing allegiance and kissing her hand, I saw her blush up to the eyes, as if she felt the contrast between their civil and their natural relations, and this was the only sign of emotion which she evinced. Her manner to them was very graceful and engaging. She kissed them both, rose from her chair, and moved towards the Duke of Sussex, who was furthest from her, and too infirm to reach her. She seemed rather bewildered at the multitude of men who were sworn, and who came one after the other to kiss her hand, but she did not speak to anybody, nor did she make the

H.R.H. PRINCESS VICTORIA
From the Picture by Richard Westall, R.A., Painted in 1820 and now in Windsor Castle

HER MAJESTY AT BRIGHTON IN 1832
"Wherever the little maiden went, as was natural, she was the centre of attraction"

slightest differences in her manner, to show any in her countenance, to any individual of any rank, station, or party. . . . . She went through the whole ceremony, occasionally looking at Melbourne for instruction when she had any doubt what to do, which hardly ever occurred, and with perfect calmness and self-possession, but at the same time with a graceful modesty and propriety particularly interesting and ingratiating. When the business was done, she retired as she entered."

If is not wonderful that, after this remarkable scene was over, the statesman, touched and charmed, should stand together in a murmur of conversation talking over this strange young apparition in the midst of them—a creature so different from the old King who had formerly claimed their often reluctant homage. A new sense of loyalty mingled with chivalry and paternal tenderness and admiration rose in their minds.

"Perfect me . . . , how amused he was at her manner and behaviour, at her apparent deep sense of her situation, her modesty and at the same time her firmness; she appeared in fact to be awed but not daunted. And afterwards the Duke of Wellington told me the same thing and added that if she had been his own daughter he could not have desired to see her perform her part better. It was settled that she was to hold a Council at St. James's this day, and he proclaimed there at ten o'clock, and she expressed a wish to see Lord Altemarle, who went to her, and told her he was come to take her orders. She said 'I have no orders to give; you know all this so much better than I do, that I leave it all to you. I am to be at St. James's at ten tomorrow, and must beg you to find me a conveyance proper for the occasion.' Accordingly he went and fetched her in State with a great escort. . . . . I rode down the Park, and saw her appear at the window when she was proclaimed. . . . The Duchess of Kent was there, but not prominent; the Queen was surrounded by her Ministers, and entitled regularly to the people. . . . At twelve she held a Council, at which she presided with as much ease as if she had been doing nothing else all her life, and though Lord Lansdowne and my colleague had contrived between them to make some confusion with the Council papers she was not put out by it. She looked very well, and although so small in stature, and without much pretension to beauty, has a dignified ease of her manner and the good expression of her countenance give her on the whole a very agreeable appearance, and with her youth inspire an excessive interest in all who approach her, and which I can't help feeling myself."

"Conyngham, when he came to her with the intelligence of the King's death, brought a request from the Queen Dowager that she might be permitted to remain at Windsor till after the funeral, and she has written her a letter couched in the kindest terms, begging her to consult nothing but her own health and convenience, and to remain at Windsor just as long as she pleases. In short, she appears to act with every kind of good taste and good feeling, as well as good sense; and, as far as it has gone, nothing can be more favourable than the impression she has made."

Higher testimony than this could scarcely be. We find another description from outside of the latter ceremony—the Proclamation at St. James's—from a very different kind of witness. It is given by the late Miss Martineau in her well-known "Autobiography," and gives a different aspect of the scene. The reader will be amused to note the difference between the respectful enthusiasm of the first narrator, who saw and heard at first hand, and was in communication with all those who had the best opportunity of judging, and the patronising approval of the lady, who had no more than a reader's share in the external aspect of affairs:—

"In the course of the morning," she says, "a friend came to invite my old ladies to go with him to a place near, where they could at their ease see the Queen presented to the people. They went into the Park, and stood in front of the window of St. James's Palace, where among other places the Sovereigns are proclaimed and presented. Scarcely half-a-dozen people were there, for very few were aware of the custom. There stood the young creature in the simplest mourning, with her sleek bands of brown hair as plain as her dress. The tears ran fast down her cheeks as Lord Melbourne stood by her side, and she was presented to the half-dozen lookers-on as their Sovereign."

Even this bewildering description, however, though not intended to convey any very favourable impression, is full of interest, and shows, though by another side, the universal touch of emotion in the mind of the country, small and great, towards this slight girl of eighteen, looking out royally, if somewhat wistfully, upon the world of which she was mistress in all the freshness and glory of that Midsummer. The "old ladies" were not so much impressed by her dignity and calm as the statesmen were, and probably conjectured the tears, and felt themselves able to divine the fluttering of the heart within so young a bosom. The same witness describes the young Majesty as being "really pretty in the upper part of the face, and with an ingenuous and sincere air which seemed full of promise"—the same genuine, yet candid, open-eyed, and straightforward look, which makes the portrait taken at this period remarkable. There is a picture in the Corridor at Windsor Castle, not of any great excellence in point of art, but affecting and interesting from the higher human charm which gives these public pageants of succession a quite new and peculiar attraction. It is called "the Queen's First Council," and shows us the girl-Queen, so young and

HER MAJESTY IN 1836

FROM THE PAINTING BY SIR GEORGE HAYTER

slight and childlike in appearance, seated with a grave simplicity among the veterans of the Council. It would be difficult to imagine anything more touching.

The Coronation took place on the 28th June, 1838. The same authority whom we have just quoted—Miss Martineau—gives a rather graphic account of the scene. "The sight of the rapid filling of the Abbey was enough to go for." She says:—

"The stone architecture contrasted finely with the gay colours of the multitude. From my high seat I commanded the whole north transept, the area with the throne, and many portions of galleries, and the balconies which were called the vaultings. Except a mere sprinkling of soldiers, everybody was in full dress. The scarlet of the military officers mixed in well, and the groups of the clergy were dignified; but to an unaccustomed eye the prevalence of Court dresses had a curious effect. I was perpetually taking whole groups of gentlemen for Quakers, till I recollected myself. The Earl Marshal's assistants, called Gold Sticks, looked well from above, lightly flitting about in white breeches, silk stockings, blue-laced frocks, and white sashes. The throne, covered, as was its footstool, with cloth of gold, stood on an elevation of four steps in the centre of the area. The first peeress took her seat in the north transept opposite at a quarter to seven, and those of the bishops came next. From that time the peers and their ladies arrived faster and faster. Each peeress was conducted by two Gold Sticks, one of whom handed her to her seat, and the other bore and arranged her train on her lap, and saw that her coronet, footstool, and book were comfortably placed. . . . . About nine the first gleams of the sun started into the Abbey, and presently travelled down to the peeresses. I had never before seen the full effect of diamonds. As the light travelled each lady shone out as a rainbow. The brightness, vastness, and dreamy magnificence of the scene produced a strange effect of exhaustion and sleepiness. . . . . The guns told when the Queen set forth; and there was unusual animation. The Gold Sticks flitted about; there was tuning in the orchestra; and the foreign ambassadors and their suites arrived in quick succession. Prince Esterhazy, crossing a bar of sunshine, was the most prodigious rainbow of all. He was covered with diamonds and pearls; and as he dangled his hat it cast a dazzling radiance all round. . . . At half-past eleven the guns told that the Queen had arrived; but as there was much to be done in the Robing-room there was a long pause before she appeared. A burst from the orchestra marked her appearance at the doors, and the anthem 'I was glad' rang through the Abbey. Everybody rose. . . . . The 'God Save the Queen' of the organ swelled gloriously forth after the recognition. The acclamation when the crown was put on her head was very animated; and in the midst of it in an instant of time the peeresses were all coronetted. . . . . The homage was as pretty a sight as any—trains of peers touching her crown and then kissing her hand."

The glimmer of magnificence in this picture might be greatly enlarged upon, but that will be better done by the artist than by the writer—though the one instance before alluded to, "the simultaneous self-coronetting of the peeresses" as the Queen's crown was put on, seems new to us, and a picturesque incident in the pageant. The Queen herself looked "small," though regal in the cloth of gold mantle, the centre of all that glittering crowd.

While all these pageants were going on, however, and everything flashing into splendour, turning into gold at the touch of her small hand, the immediate circle of advisers and friends around the young Sovereign fed her with no flatteries or foolish exultation. Her mother, who had watched over her so closely now withdrew, as etiquette and necessity required, from at least the constant companionship in which they had previously lived. But Baron Stockmar remained at the Queen's elbow, the private representative of his Royal master and friend King Leopold; and that anxious guardian himself never abated his vigilance, watching over every step his young niece took, and always ready to counsel her. And from this wise uncle to the young cousin setting out upon his travels, who had heard of her elevation with a beating heart all the friendly princely circle breathed exhortation to duty and conscientious endeavour in the young Queen's ear. "Now you are Queen of the mightiest land in Europe, in your hand lies the happiness of millions," said young Prince Albert in his letter of congratulation. He was going to Italy, in the freedom of a life less burdened, less full of splendid care than hers, yet not without a thought that his very wanderings were some time to be of service to her. "May Heaven bless you," he adds, "and strengthen with its strength in that high and difficult task." Under no light aspect was the young Queen permitted to contemplate her new position, and no doubt this profound sense of the gravity of a great office produced "the astonishing self-possession" at which her anxious kinsfolk themselves wondered, and which the English statesmen regarded with such an unanimous impulse of honest admiration.

Of the short interval which followed of the young Queen's reign alone there is little record. She herself speaks of it with expressions of regret not unusual in an exceptionally pure and virtuous life, where a little youthful levity, looking back over the fair landscape of well-spent years, seems almost like a crime. The brighter that landscape is, the more profound looks the innocent shadow of the morning cloud. "The sudden change from the secluded life at Kensington to the independence of her position as Queen-regnant at the age of eighteen," might have been an excuse for many mistakes. But it is hard to see what there is to pardon. She was guilty of one little constitutional sin, which, we may make bold to say now, amused the nation fully more than it alarmed it. Lord Melbourne had resigned, who was the Queen's first Minister

THE NEWS OF THE KING'S DEATH CONVEYED TO H.M. THE QUEEN AT KENSINGTON PALACE, JUNE 20, 1837
"The King died during the night, and it is said that the official intimation was made to the Duchess of Kent and her daughter next morning before five o'clock."

and devoted personal friend, besides being the head of the party to which all her training had inclined her, and Sir Robert Peel was prepared to take his place; but the efforts of the Conservative Premier were frustrated by the refusal of the Queen to change her Mistress of the Robes and Bedchamber Ladies—an unforeseen proceeding which had the result of deferring the change for a short time. More violent personal demonstrations, however, had taken place under the previous Kings, none of whom had professed that absolute impartiality in respect to the two great parties in the political world which the Queen's example and steady practice throughout her long subsequent reign has made familiar to us. But naturally the error of judgment, if it went so far, made by a girl of twenty was pounced upon by critics to whom the pranks of an elderly King appeared justifiable. And no doubt had a wilful habit been established of this kind, and an English Sovereign taken up the irritating position of confounding all the plans of politicians, and baffling the wish of the country by such means, the situation might have become serious. As it was, a certain grateful sense of naturalness comes in, when we find the Queen's one public fault in her long career to have been of this character. It was in May, 1839, nearly two years after her accession, that the incident occurred. "It is well understood now," says Mr. Theodore Martin, in his "Life of the Prince Consort," "that there was misunderstanding on both sides; but the immediate effect was to exasperate the Tory party by the feeling that a tottering Ministry owed its continuance in office to the personal predilections of the Sovereign." Nowadays, however, nobody can suppose that there was any danger to the Constitution in the act, and the episode remains an amusing and characteristic one, lighting up the dulness of politics with a picturesque incident. Never again did Her Majesty depart from the Constitutional impartiality which looks upon Whig and Tory, Conservative and Liberal with the same calm confidence and friendliness; and we confess, for our own part, that this one little "fling" of youthful impetuosity gives to ourselves a more affectionate realisation of the character and difficulties of the Queen.

She herself, however, judges herself more severely, and has recorded her painful recollection of this moment of early freedom, when, perhaps, her head was slightly turned by the splendour and absolute freedom of her great position. "A worse school for a young girl, or one more detrimental to all natural feelings and affections, cannot well be imagined," Her Majesty says, with profound gravity and feeling. Such being the case, as she tells, who can judge best, it is satisfactory that so little harm came of it. To the pure all things are pure, even the delightful follies of youth. Miss Martineau, the most unfavourable of critics, who has something disagreeable to say of most people she mentions, and to whom the monarchy altogether was "unreal," says of the young Queen that she laughed and talked on all occasions when this censor beheld her—a pleasant fault. Another shortcoming of Her Majesty during this interval of gaiety was that all ideas of marriage were put out of her mind by the whirl of busy life and independent action. Her girlhood had been so sober, her whole life so retired and quiet, that the dazzle and movement of the great world delighted her. In the revulsion of feeling she preferred London to the country, a preference curiously unlike the sentiments of her later life, though not remarkable, it must be allowed, between the ages of eighteen and twenty, a period at which few young persons of any rank prefer quiet to amusement. However, this gay interval was not to last long. And in this same year, 1839, there occurred the charming little romance—better known probably than any other romance of real life in this century, and delightful in its quaint variety of circumstance, so unlike yet so like the perennial love-tale, which was to open to Queen Victoria the happy doors of Home, and begin for her that domestic life in which her noblest influence, as well as her best happiness, lay.

CHAPTER III.

A ROYAL ROMANCE

PRINCE ALBERT, as we have said, had come to England in the year 1836, when he and his Royal cousin were seventeen. The two young people had pleased each other; they were alike in their tastes, loving music both of them, and art—playing on the piano together, as the Queen has recorded, and sharing the sight-seeings and events of the moment, from a sermon in St. Paul's to a ball in Kensington Palace. After this, King Leopold, who was the uncle of both, had communicated with the Princess on the subject, and had received an innocent frank response from her, accepting the idea with something of the readiness of a child, to whom an arrangement affecting her whole life was as simple as if it had been a holiday invitation. Since that time, however, no active steps had been taken. The Prince had been travelling, studying, working hard as always at the cultivation and perfection of his life, with nothing as yet clearly decided how that life was to be spent. It was understood that King William did not like the match—which, perhaps, was not much to be wondered at, as the Princess Victoria's mother and uncle were not among the number of his friends, and another scion of the same race might naturally be supposing to the old King. Neither was it expedient that such an arrangement should be talked about until it should be finally decided upon. And after the Queen's Accession, when she was herself full of the excitement and business of such a great beginning, she had expressed herself as desirous of delay. "The change had put all ideas of marriage out of her mind"—a fact which Her Majesty describes herself as "bitterly repentant" of—but which must have appeared a wise decision enough to the outside spectator, unacquainted, as all lookers-on must have been, with the remarkable and quite exceptional qualities possessed by Prince Albert.

Indeed, in this case it is the young Princess, with only her instinct of what was best to guide her, rather than the anxious uncle, full of sagacity and experience as he was, of whom an imperfect critic would have approved. King Leopold wrote to his niece in the beginning of 1838, pressing that some "decisive arrangement" might be come to. To this Her Majesty demurred, for reasons which her uncle considered conclusive, and which those who know the world best will agree were dictated by sound practical judgment. She was herself, she urged, too young; as also was the Prince; and being still under age a marriage with him would be considered by her subjects as premature. Moreover, his mastery of the English language was still very imperfect, and if he was to take up a proper position in England it was important that this defect should be remedied; and that he should also have a wider experience, more practical habits of observation, and more self-reliance than it was possible he could up to that time have acquired.

Nothing could be more sensible than these considerations. The Queen explains that they arose from no change of opinion on her part. She "never thought of" any one else, and if perhaps an inclination to enjoy for a little the innocent freedom of her girlhood before entering upon the graver chapter of married life was in her mind, what could be more natural? The "fair vestal throned in the West," the "Imperial votaress" at whom Cupid's shaft was thus prematurely launched, evaded the all-penetrating arrow, and passed on like her predecessor "in maiden meditation fancy free" for the moment. But not like Elizabeth, whose solitary state was a matter at once of policy and pride. No such deeply-rooted plan was in Queen Victoria's mind. She was coy, as every young maiden has a right to be, and disposed to hold at arm's length the assured happiness which might have come at

THE DUKE OF SUSSEX, UNCLE TO THE QUEEN,
Born 1773. Died 1843

hour too soon had the wiser people had their way. Nor is it wonderful if this was tantalising to those elder spectators whose hearts were set upon the succession of which they had so long seen the supreme appropriateness. Who could tell what fancy might sweep through either of these youthful heads, destroying all the careful plans in a moment?—for there is no certainty so certain, everybody knows, as that the most careful arrangements about marriage constantly fall through, and that on both sides the heart is much more ready to choose where it ought not than where it ought. This consciousness must have kept the advisers in a ferment, while the young Queen held back in shy maidenhood, and the young Prince with natural impatience would fain have known his fate. He went to Italy, however, as the best occupation for his time of suspense, and after returning from that tour was permitted to go to England with his brother on a visit from which he at least it is apparent expected no particular results. "The Queen declared to my uncle of Belgium that she wished the affair to be considered as broken off, and that for four years she would think of no marriage," the Prince himself wrote to one of his anxious friends, with perhaps a little suspicion of wounded feeling in the words; "I mean, therefore, with quiet but firm resolution, to declare on my part that I also withdraw entirely." How it was that, meeting with such serious intentions of bidding each other a dignified farewell, the young couple should have rushed into each other's arms instead, the lady forgetting her wisdom and the youth his dignity, let other young men and maidens say. It is a mystery, yet as common as love is, and youth. . . .

It was in October, of the year 1839 that the two young Coburg princes thus came to England. They brought with them a letter from King Leopold, which ran as follows:—

"My Dearest Victoria,

"Your cousins will themselves be the bearers of these lines. I recommend them to you. They are good and honest creatures, deserving your kindness; not pedantic, but really sensible and trustworthy. I have told them that your great wish is that they should be quite at their ease with you."

The young men arrived. Their cousin, no longer the little girl of Kensington in the homely old-fashioned home, but a great queen, received them at the top of the royal staircase amid all the magnificence of Windsor Castle, as if these two wandering knights had been emperors. But, after this grand reception, the commonest of incidents brings back the princely travellers and the royal circle into the sympathy of homelier life. Their portmanteaus, it is to be supposed, had gone astray, as happens to so many of us—or at least did not arrive in time—and the dinner hour was near. "Their clothes not having arrived," the Queen writes in her "Journal," "they could not appear at dinner, but came in after it in spite of their morning clothes." There was a circle of visitors assembled—and no doubt some little tremor in the air—wonderings and whisperings, and close watching of all the looks and words interchanged between the cousins. Prince Albert was now full-grown, in all the freshness of twenty, the age at which a handsome youth is handsomest, before any of the bloom has been rubbed off. "There was in his countenance a gentleness of expression and a peculiar sweetness in his smile, with a look of deep thought and high intelligence in his clear blue eyes and expansive forehead, that added a charm to the effect he produced in those who saw him, far beyond that derived from mere regularity or beauty of features." He was as good as he was handsome, full of high purpose and the most delicate conscientiousness. No lover more likely to please ever appeared in lady's bower.

And the life in the beautiful old Castle in those mellow autumn days was gay and bright as heart could desire. The head of the house was young and light hearted, the visitors all proud and happy to contribute to her amusement, and to keep the palace gay. "The way of life in Windsor during the stay of the Princes was much as follows:—The Queen breakfasting in her own room, they afterwards paid her a visit there; and at two o'clock had luncheon with her and the Duchess of Kent. In the afternoon they all rode, the Queen and Duchess and the two Princes, with Lord Melbourne and most of the ladies and gentlemen in attendance, forming a large cavalcade. There was a great dinner every evening, with a dance after it three times a week." This pleasant routine went on for a week. The brothers had arrived on the 8th, Prince Albert and Queen Victoria being then both of a mind (to believe their own statements) that the tacit understanding between them was over, and they would not marry, not they, for years to come. But before the 15th something had changed the notions of the young pair. What it was who could tell? They were just as young as ever, they who had so prudently concluded that they were too young—but they felt themselves too young no longer. Whatever clouds there had been on the horizon had all blown away before the soft breezes on Windsor Hill, the air of the woods through which they had ridden together, the morning walks, the evening gaieties. Yet the wooing was not all easy and plain before them as before other pairs. There were not the days in which any noble knight, even if not a Prince, could address a Queen. What had to be said must be said by her, not by him—a strange necessity. But no doubt it seems a more difficult matter in talking of it than it was in the doing of it. When the young Prince was summoned alone to the young Sovereign's presence no doubt the first glance, the first word, was enough to tell him that his cause was won. "After a few minutes' conversation the Queen told him why she had sent for him." A happy mist falls over all that was said and done. When the young pair emerge from it and are seen again of ordinary mortals, there is a mare of gladness about them which, all unaware, each expresses in almost the same words. "These last few days have passed like a dream to me, and I am so much bewildered by it all that I know hardly how to write; but I do feel very happy," writes the Queen to her uncle—he to whom this good news would be so welcome. And "more I can't write to you, for at this moment I am too bewildered," says the Prince on his side, striking, as became him, a bolder note, and throwing his rapture and happiness into the words of the poet—

Das Auge sieht den Himmel offen
Es schwimmt das Herz in Seligkeit,
Upon the eyes Heaven opens bright;
The heart is flooded with delight.

There is no more beautiful passage in poetry than that from which these lines are taken, and which would be remembered in all its beautiful warmth and completeness by the correspondent in whose kind ear the Prince poured forth his joy.

All this charming little idyll is told to us by the chief actor in it—the Queen herself, in the fullness of her heart; and the wonderful humility and simplicity with which she throughout puts herself in the secondary place is one of the most remarkable exhibitions of womanly nature that ever was revealed to the world. "How I will strive to make him feel as little as possible the great sacrifice he has made," she says in her "Journal," noting down the events of that wonderful day. "I told him it was a great sacrifice on his part, but he would not allow it." No doubt the Queen's imagination pictured forth a whole brilliant world of conquest and victory which her hero was giving up to be her companion. Never was a more complete instance of that softening and tender humility which is one of the first consequences in a generous and pure mind of happy love. A delicious wonder took possession of both to find themselves thus beloved.

The happy agitation in the Castle that day, the letters that were written, the whispers that ran through the delighted Court, the couriers that were sent off laden with the news, may easily be divined. Ernest—good brother and sympathetic spectator!—was sent

THE FIRST COUNCIL OF HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN, KENSINGTON PALACE, JUNE 20, 1837
From the Picture by Sir David Wilkie, R.A., now in Windsor Castle

LEOPOLD I., KING OF THE BELGIANS, THE QUEEN'S UNCLE,
Born 1790. Died 1865

LORD MELBOURNE
Born 1779. Died 1848

"Precisely at two o'block" (the narrative is from the Queen's Journal) "I went in. The room was full, but I hardly knew who was there. Lord Melbourne I saw looking kindly at me, with tears in his eyes, but he was not near me. I then read my short declaration. I felt that my hands shook, but I did not make one mistake. I felt most happy and thankful when it was over. Lord Lansdowne then rose, and in the name of the Privy Council asked that "this most gracious and most welcome communication might be printed. I then left the room, the whole thing not taking above two or three minutes. The Duke of Cambridge came into the small library where I was standing, and wished me joy."

This was not the only public intimation which her Majesty was forced, by the necessities of her position, to make of her intentions. The agitation which sends the crowd of Privy Councillors hurriedly to her so that she "hardly knew who was there," no doubt veiled in the same way the embarrassment of individual looks from the Queen, when nearly two months later she had to meet the great English Parliament, and repeat her vale. And no doubt the universal sympathy which surrounded her helped her to get through this trial too. Crowds gathered on the way to see her going to Parliament on that wintry morning a few weeks before her wedding day. They cheered her to the echo as she went along with her heart beating. Every seat was occupied in the House of Lords, and every voice which was raised there, after the intimation had been made, was of one unanimous tone. Not only were politics forgotten in the universal sympathy, but all classes of politicians alike approved of the Royal choice, and saw in it a guarantee of exemption from all those imperfections which had made Royal domestic life so far from exemplary during the last generations.

The statesmen who expressed the sentiments of England in its

THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON
Born 1769. Died 1852

formally to congratulate and rejoice with them. The kind Premier in attendance, Lord Melbourne, approved and rejoiced too, and there was nothing but happy wishes and anticipations round. "He seems perfection," says the young Queen in her happiness. On the very day on which all this was taking place, King Leopold from his Belgian palace, not dreaming, for all his wisdom, how rapid a course young hearts could take when left to themselves, was writing in playful recommendation of his nephews. "I am sure you will like them the more, the longer you see them," he says, all unaware that just then the young man of whom he said that no "puppy-like affection" was to be found in him, had become "perfection" in the royal lady's eyes. How sincerely happy he was need not be said. He has "almost the feeling of old Sincero," he writes with affecting tenderness. "Now letters thou thy servant depart in peace."

In ordinary cases, when this climax has been arrived at, the excitement is over and the happy marriage may be announced in a sentence, all the real drama of the love-tale having been played out; but the position of the Queen was so unique and remarkable that every step was full of interest. The young pair remained together for above a month, keeping their secret from all but their friends, and greeting so know each other in the close intercourse of their betrothal. And it was not till the departure of the young lover had brought back common life and its cares, that the Queen herself, for the public declaration which no one could make for her. The situation is so peculiar that we know scarcely any precedent for it. Even now, when she had been two years on the throne, no Queen so young had ever reigned in England, and no English Queen had ever had such a moving tale to tell to her Privy Councillors. The young lady did it with the modest dignity which had from the first distinguished her. And here is the description of it she has herself given us, with her usual happy simplicity and straightforwardness. The Privy Council, knowing how important the sitting was, mustered strong. There were eighty gentlemen of them assembled in the "new room on the ground-floor of Buckingham Palace," whom this young creature, with heart full, had to face alone, and tell what had happened to her. She had a bracket upon her pretty wrist with the Prince's portrait, which "seemed to give me courage."

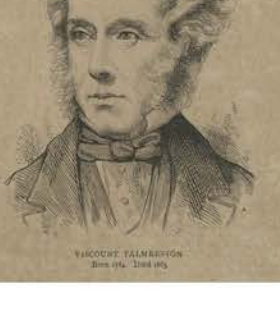
HER MAJESTY IN MILITARY COSTUME AT A REVIEW AT WINDSOR, 1837
From the Picture by Preston

SIR ROBERT PEEL
Born 1788. Died 1850

gravest Imperial dignity were as glad of the love-match as the youngest sentimentalist could have been. "If frequently happens," said Sir Robert Peel, "that political considerations interfere with such transactions, and that persons in exalted stations are obliged to sacrifice their private feelings to the sense of public duty. Her Majesty, however, has the singular good fortune to be able to gratify her private feelings while she performs her public duty, and to obtain the best guarantee for happiness by contracting an alliance founded on affection." In short, her happy love, so simple, so natural, and true, was the greatest public service which the Queen could have done to her country. And amid all foolishness to which the universal passion drives mankind, it is an exceptional privilege, worthy a modern Queen, thus to be able to substitute honest love and bring it into favour and fashion as not only the best but the wisest of sentiments, the legitimate crown of life and youth.

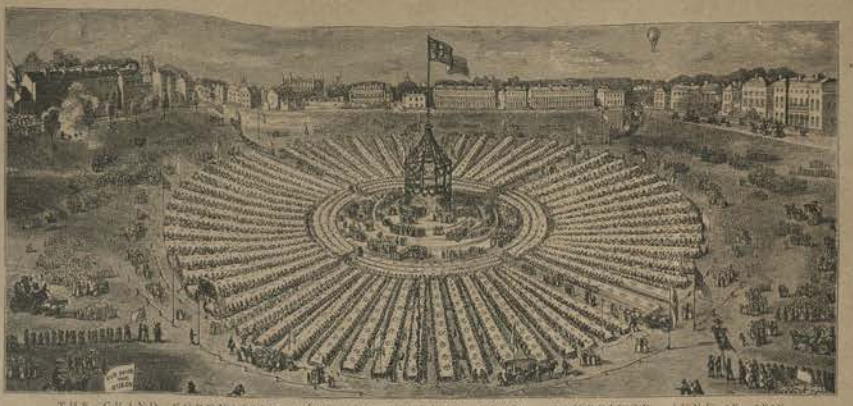
But though all was so happy in the main point it is not to be supposed that the course of true love ran absolutely smooth in this case any more than in others. No misunderstanding, indeed, seems ever to have crossed the happy accord of the two principal personages concerned, but never pair were more plagued by sentiments and lawyers and troublesome parents and guardians than this Royal pair were by the still more troublesome punctilios of Parliament, the contentions of party, and the petty talismans of rank.

Many of us on the lower levels of society profess to smile at the difficulties of precedence, and think it a question beneath the serious attention of reasonable people; but this is just one of the points in which ignorance alone is to blame for the want of sympathy so



VISCOUNT PALMERSTON
Born 1784. Died 1865

commonly shown, and a little exercise of the imagination will at once show how galling it must have been to the Queen of Great Britain to know that her husband might be pushed from her side in any Imperial ceremonial by some whipper-snapper of a petty king's son or archduke's not worthy to tie his shoe. "When the Queen was abroad," Her Majesty herself tells us, "the Prince's position was always a subject of negotiation and vexation; the position accorded to him the Queen had always to acknowledge as a great and favour bestowed on her by the Sovereigns whom she visited. While in 1840 the Emperor of the French treated the Prince as a Royal personage, his own uncle declined to come to Paris, because he would not give precedence to the Prince; and on the Rhine, in 1845, the King of Prussia would not give place to the Queen's husband, which, common civility required, because of the presence of an Archduke, the *third son of an uncle* of the reigning Emperor of Austria, who would not give the *pas*, and whom the King would not offend. The only legal position in Europe, according to international law, which the husband of the Queen enjoyed was that of a younger brother of the Duke of Saxe-Coburg, and this merely because the English law did not know of him." It cannot be wondered at that the refusal of the Parliament to settle this painful question, and the apparent want of generosity and liberality which made the House of Commons cut down the allowance made to Prince Albert from 50,000*l.*—the sum which had been granted to the husband of the Princess Charlotte—to 30,000*l.*, was very annoying to the Queen, who felt the apparent slight to him betrothed deeply. It was a kind of experience which under harshly into the delight and happiness of the first engagement, in which everything was wholly satisfactory and happy. A check of this kind given in the heyday of hope and pleasure is naturally felt with a certain bitterness, and, however good might be the reasons for the economy thus practised at Prince Albert's expense, it seems a singular and most unnecessary piece of neglect to have left his position undefined. It would seem, however, that this was due to negligence as much as to the party squabbles for which it afforded a fit occasion, and was not at all to be attributed to any lack of personal good feeling—an important distinction which the Prince himself, with his usual good sense, fully understood,



THE GRAND CORONATION FÊTE ON PARKER'S PIECE, CAMBRIDGE, JUNE 28, 1838

FROM A DRAWING BY G. SHARP

and which the Queen allowed and believed, at least after further acquaintance with "the Tories" had subdued that feeling of partizanship which she candidly acknowledges, and which was so natural in her circumstances. It was the Tories, then in Opposition, who procured these checks and discouragements to the young pair; and this was not likely to make the Queen—serious as she was for the honour of him whom, then and ever after, she thought the most perfect of beings—more favourably disposed towards the party whom she had been brought up to dislike.

Besides these important matters, which were mismanaged by the Government and upset by the Opposition, there were lesser points which demanded careful supervision—arrangements about the Prince's household and its officers, and many other details necessary to the comfort of the new establishment. The Queen herself tells us with her usual delightful naturalness and simplicity that "precedents were searched for to see what the Prince's household should consist of—but the one commonly referred to," she says, with fine scorn, "was that of Prince George of Denmark, the very stupid and insignificant husband of Queen Anne." Insignificant, Queen Victoria knew her husband could never be, and her disdain of such an ignoble comparison is charmingly naïve and natural. All this doubtful and troublesome business made the interval between the Prince's departure and return a time of heaviness to the young couple. She had to bear in indignant silence all those apparent slights to him, inflicted it would seem in her own name, angry and wounded as she was by them; while he, for his part, had to go through the parting with his many affectionate relatives in Germany, which was trying to his tender heart; while the warmth of his welcome in England seemed to be rendered doubtful by these unkindly economies and debates. However, all this did not retard the marriage, which was fixed for the 10th February, 1840. When the Prince came back to England a few days before the wedding, there was no coldness in the welcome he received. It is not on such occasions that the English people show any lack of enthusiasm. From the moment he landed, eager crowds, shouting and cheering, met and followed him everywhere. He was young and handsome, all that the popular eye wanted to content its broad general sense of what was befitting in a Prince and a bridegroom, and the people were delighted that their Queen was making a love-match, more delighted with this inner fact than with all the grave Imperial reasons for it, and all the admirable palliation of the bridegroom. It is one of the chief spells to which the simple popular imagination in England always answers. "It is this which makes your Majesty's marriage so popular," Lord Melbourne said; and there was not a humble bystander in the crowd who did not acknowledge as strong a claim upon their sympathy.

The 10th of February rose dull and cloudy, with frequent showers, and when the bridal party set out for St. James's, where the marriage took place—through streets thronged with spectators, who stood out undaunted through the rain and cold—the dull morning was all unlike the "Queen's weather" which had already become a proverb. The bride was, as is more or less the case with every bride, even the humblest, the chief point of attraction to everybody. In all the accounts that have been given of Her Majesty's marriage in the volumes which have been inspired by her and put forth on her behalf since, it has been the figure of the Prince which has been most prominent, and this fond win of affection almost makes the reader believe that England was watching the Prince and his demeanour on this great occasion as much as that of her Queen. It is scarcely necessary, however, to say that, tender and beautiful as is the solely love which would fain give this impression, it was not really so. The bride is the chief personage at every marriage feast, and pre-eminently so at this one, though she herself is often enough, as in this case, the only individual who does not perceive it. "The Queen's look and manner," Lady Lyttelton says, who was one of the Ladies-in-Waiting, "were very pleasing, her eyes much swollen with tears, but great happiness in her countenance, and her look of confidence and comfort at the Prince when they walked away as man and wife was very pleasing to see. I understand she is in extremely high spirits since. Such a new thing for her to live to be unguarded in conversing with anybody, and, with her frank and fearless nature, the restraints she has hitherto been under from one reason or another with everybody must have been most painful."

The Queen, we are told, was received with "tremendous shouts" as she drove slowly along from Buckingham Palace to St. James's through such a crowd as had seldom assembled before even in loyal England. She was "extremely pale" as she passed along, under the gaze of multitudes, her mother by her side, crowned with nothing but those pure flowers which are dedicated to the day of bridal, and not even permitted the luxury of a veil over her drooping face. The lace fell about her, but left her royal countenance undecided, we are told, to that all might see. Even at that moment she belonged to her kingdom. When the procession returned after the ceremony, the courtly chronicle of the newspapers does not fail to

THE CORONATION OF HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY, JUNE 28, 1838

FROM THE PICTURE BY SIR GEORGE HAYTER

WINDSOR CASTLE

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

roved a change of expression quite according to all rules. Her Majesty had looked "anxious and excited," and "extremely pale" as she went to be married, but "she entered her own hall," coming back "with a joyous and open countenance, flushed, perhaps, in the slightest degree," and acknowledged the cheers with which she was greeted in the most smiling and condescending manner. Shortly after the showers and clouds disappeared as by magic, and the "Queen's weather" shone out triumphant. In the afternoon the bridal carriage set out for Windsor, during all the way, for in those days the railways had not become the habitual and indispensable mode of travelling everywhere, as they are nowadays. Almost all the way the road was lined and thronged by spectators, twenty-two miles of it, every soul turning out from the lowest and village on the way. "Our reception," the Queen says, "was most enthusiastic, hearty and gratifying in every way, the people quite deafening us with their cheers, hurrahs, &c., going along with us." When they reached Windsor, the whole irregular line of the picturesque little town, from Eton upwards to the Castle gates, sparkled with lights: and Eton turned out as one boy with one vast chorus of delight and excitement to greet the bridal pair, and accompany them from its own bounds to the last practical step of the way, as far as even schoolboys could penetrate. Then, with one universal cry of gladness, with a close accompaniment of sympathetic cheering, with every demonstration of kindness and affection in interest which a country could give, the young pair were escorted to the very door of their home.

CHAPTER IV.

DOMESTIC LIFE

THERE is some truth as well as an evident and transparent foolishness in that expedient of fiction which terminates a story with marriage. It is scarcely credible that any imagination ever serious could really believe that the troubles of life end there, and that "to live happy ever after" is the easy conclusion of the tale, after the hands of the lovers have been joined and all their early difficulties got over. But there is at the same time a certain human fitness and delicate justice in the sentiment. There is no crisis so simple and complete in all the after life—none that bears telling so well, or lessens the horror so completely, or which is so entirely individual to the person who excites our interest. In after years a hundred complications come in, and the unity of the youthful tale is disturbed by growing cares and increasing numbers. Marriages is an end, as death is—the end of one period, the beginning of another—when we pass that early confusion which is joyful, nothing remains for us but to go on to another conclusion in which there is no joy—the end which is made across the human pathway by the sudden and impassable barrier of Death.

It is apparent that some such feeling as this must have moved the Queen herself when she came, long afterwards, in her sorrow and loneliness, to give forth the first memorials of her husband to the world. These recollections centred in the tender and charming episode of romance which makes a flowery spot in most lives; and accordingly we have more details of this ravishing and beautiful period than of any other. The young pair came to Windsor on their bridal. happiness, as has been said; the people all along the road from London coming out to greet them, and cheer them, with that admiration and sympathy which, at such a moment, is universal, and attends even those who have much less right to the general interest. That their Queen should make a love-match, that the object of her choice should be so young and graceful and handsome, that both together, a pair of blue-eyed simple lovers, should be easy to the fine quiver and trembling of their happiness, as embodiments of the dream which comes to most human creatures once in their lives, a visible representation of the great subject of poetry and romance, was very captivating to the popular mind; but to the young pair it seems to have been that opening of the gates of Paradise which every marriage of true minds ought to be. The Queen herself has given us with touching sincerity many glimpses into a mind so loving, so humble in its greatness and happiness, the heart not of a woman even, much less a monarch, but of a girl, astonished at her own blessedness, and grateful beyond all measure for the love which she returned "so fully and warmly, and with which she had so much to bestow—that it would be a hard heart, indeed, which could refuse sympathy to those outbreaks of bridal and true loving rich which she herself tells the tale. The short period of solitary Queenhood, when she had been alone, appeared to her but as a painful passage to the happier and fuller life which had now opened to her. Her Majesty's confessions of inexperience are almost amusing in their innocence, for it is always the lives hardened to custom that is the most sensitive. The Prince loved the early hours and tranquil pleasures of the country; and his young wife not only conformed to those tastes with a happy docility which many humble brides fail in, but soon learned to make his standard hers, and to repent of the contrary habits which looked by comparison wickedness. They were at first "very late in the morning, breakfasting at ten (which was the Queen's hour)," but soon changed in that respect, and might be seen out in the lovely park at Windsor, or wherever they might be, strolling the morning slowly from the grass, and refreshing their young souls with the purity and freshness of the early day. And before she has been a year married the young wife made to the young husband a pretty confession which was the highest of tender compliments. "I told Albert," the Queen says, "that formerly I was too happy to go to London, and wretched to leave it, and how, since the fatigue hour of my marriage, and still more since the summer, I dislike and am unhappy to leave the country, and would be content and happy never to go to town." She adds—this is written in the year 1840, when she was a young lady of twenty-one, with all the world at her feet, and all its pleasures and splendours—"The solid pleasures of a peaceful, quiet, yet merry life in the country, with my husband and husband and friend, say all in all, are far more desirable than the amusements of London, though we don't despise or dislike them sometimes." A sentiment more English or more likely to delight the English people, who had not been fond of the last Royal generation, nor at all allied by their domestic histories could not be. And this new Royal House, so natural and wholesome and happy, made all the atmosphere better round it, discouraging the evil and giving countenance to everything that was good. It is needless to tell how much Prince Albert had to do in the organisation and maintenance of this opulent and affectionate dwelling. The Queen has been too anxious to give to her husband the entire credit of everything good in it to leave us in any doubt on the subject, and it has been her endeavour to represent herself as always following, while he led the way. But the very existence of such an attitude on the part of a lady so illustrious is the highest testimony that could be given to her own ingenuous and modest character. It is not from Her Majesty that we are likely to hear what was his own share of the regulation of the well-ordered household life, and all the glory, all the credit, she bestows with a liberal hand upon him; and would make out, if she could, that never were such sacrifices made, or such blessings shed around him, by any noble husband upon the simplest cottage maiden whom he had chosen for his wife. Such sentiments have a wonderful potency in the midst of their freshness and unfeigned generosity and humility as coming from the lips of one who had everything to give, and whose position of supremacy makes of every such yielding of the superior place a special grace.

This generous gratitude for every mark of affection, and humbleness of self-estimate is apparent in all the Queen says at this period of her life. When her husband was about to part with the relations and friends who had attended him at his marriage, her care for sympathy is quite remarkable. At such a moment it may be pardoned to a young woman, even when all the external circumstances are reversed, and the subject one more than to receive, to feel herself the principal person, and well worth any family refinement that may be made for her. This, in short, we suspect is the general feeling with brides who are not always tolerant of regret on the husband's part for any old association, and are disposed to take any sign of the mingled feelings common to every change of life—any indication of possible loss on his part to balance the acquisition he has just made—as an offence against their newly-acquired right to the entire possession of his heart. To such brides the Queen's example ought to come with special force. Prince Albert's only brother paid the young married pair a more prolonged visit than the other members of the family, and when he too departed in his turn, the Queen's sympathy with her husband in the deprivation was most thorough, and even unpremeditated. "Oh, how I feel for my dearest, precious husband at this moment!" she exclaims, with all a young girl's fervour of feeling. "Father, brother, friends, country—all has he left, and all for me. God grant that I may be the happy person, the most happy person, to make this dearest, blessed being happy and contented. What is in my power to make him happy I will do." The Prince, on the other hand, assures his bride, even in the pang of parting with his own people, "that if I continued to love him as I did now, I could make up for all." These simple mutual pledges and hopes, the interchange of sentiment which is common to peasants and to kings, shows upon what foundations the Royal House was established. Paul and Virginia could not have said anything different; and they were come to the crown of youthful happiness.

And the young pair, so happy in their love, were also happy in their mutual home. Both were fond of music, and arts, and well instructed in both. Here is the Queen's own sketch of a day of their life, with all its occupations and amusements:—

"They breakfasted at nine, and took a walk every morning soon afterwards: then came the usual amount of business (far less heavy, however, than now), besides which they drew and etched a great deal together, which was a source of great amusement, having the plates to do in the house. Luncheon followed at the usual hour of two o'clock. Lord Melbourne (the Prime Minister at the time) came to the Queen in the afternoon, and between her and the Prince generally drove her out in a pony phaeton. If the Prince did not drive the Queen he rode, in which case she took a drive with the Duchess of Kent or the ladies. The Prince also read

OSBORNE HOUSE, ISLE OF WIGHT

BALMORAL CASTLE, SCOTLAND

LOUISA, DUCHESS OF SAXE-COBURG-SAALFELD
Mother of the Prince Consort. Born 1800. Died 1831

will accept this present as a remembrance;' and gave me a little cane with a beautiful ring, on which is engraved 'V.R., 1842.'

"The Queen came back, and said, 'Lady —— is gone, and has taken all my things with her. It really is most annoying.' I then begged that I might not be made to suffer for the accident, and hoped she would sing another song. After some consultation with her husband, he said, 'She will sing you something of Gluck's.' Meantime the Princess of Gotha had come in, and we five proceeded through various corridors and rooms to the Queen's sitting-room. The Duchess of Kent came in, too, and while they were all talking I rummaged about among the music and soon discovered my first set of songs. So, of course, I begged her rather to sing one of those from the Gluck, to which she very kindly consented; and which did she choose? 'Schoner und schoner schmückt sich?' sang it quite charming, in strict time and tune, and with very good execution. Only in the line, 'Der Pfeile Lauren und Muh,' where it goes down to D, and then comes up again chromatically, she sang D sharp each time, and as I gave her the note both times, the last time she sang D, and then it ought to have been D sharp. But, with the exception of this little mistake, it was really charming; and the last long G I have never heard better or purer, or more natural from an amateur. Then I was obliged to confess that Fanny had written the song (which I found very hard—but pride must have a fall), and to beg her to sing one of my own also. If I would give plenty of help she would gladly try, she said; and then she sang the 'Pilgrets-pruch,' 'Lass dich nur,' really quite faultlessly, and with charming feeling and expression. I thought to myself one must not pay too many compliments on such an occasion, so I merely thanked her a great many times; upon which she said, 'Oh! if only I had not been so frightened; generally I have such long breath.' Then I

ERNEST I., DUKE OF SAXE-COBURG-SAALFELD
Father of the Prince Consort. Born 1784. Died 1844

VIEW OF THE ROSENAU, WHERE THE PRINCE CONSORT WAS BORN

VIEW OF THE ROSENAU WHERE THE PRINCE CONSORT WAS BORN

stood most days to the Queen. The dinner was at eight o'clock, and always with the company. . . . The hours were never late, and it was very seldom that the party had not broken up at eleven o'clock." There must have been exceptions to this rule, however, as "The Queen also gave many dinners, often followed by little dances; and they went frequently to the play, of which the Prince was always very fond." One of the first studies which they took up together was that of music; for which, as for so many other branches of Art, Prince Albert had both taste and talent. The example of the Queen and Prince no doubt greatly stimulated the study of classical music in England, and fostered that more enlightened appreciation of it which now exists. Nothing, however, can show the musical tastes of the young Royal household at this time so well as the following letter from Mendelssohn, which is so graphic and so genuine, and gives so clear a glimpse of the Queen herself, in her own kind and friendly person, that we may be permitted to quote it at length. It is dated July 19th, 1842, two years after the Queen's marriage:—

"I must tell you [Mendelssohn is writing to his mother] all the details of my last visit to Buckingham Palace. It is, as E. says, the one really pleasant and thoroughly comfortable English house, where one feels *one's ease*. Of course I do know a few others, but still on the whole I agree with him. Joking apart, Prince Albert had asked me to go to him on Saturday at two o'clock, as that I might try his organ, before I left England; I found him alone, and as we were talking the Queen came in also alone in a simple morning dress. She said she was obliged to leave for Claremont in an hour, and then suddenly interrupting herself, exclaimed, 'But goodness, what a confusion!' for the wind had fluttered the whole room, and even the pedals of the organ (which, by the way, made a very pretty feature in the room) with leaves of music from a large portfolio which lay open. As she spoke she knelt down and began picking up the music. Prince Albert helped, and I, too, was not idle. Then Prince Albert proceeded to explain the stops to me, and she said she would meanwhile make things straight. I begged that the Prince would first play over something so that as I said I might boast about it in Germany, and he played a Chorale by heart with the pedals, so charmingly and clearly and correctly that it would have done credit to any professional; and the Queen *sat so dreaded for work*, came and sat by him and listened, and looked pleased. Then it was my turn, and I began my chorus from St. Paul, 'How lovely are the messengers.' Before I got to the end of the first verse they both joined in the chorus, and all the time Prince Albert managed the stops for me so cleverly—first a flute, at the *forte* the great organ, at the D major part the whole, then he made a lovely *diminuendo* with the stops, and so on to the end of the piece, and all by heart—that I was really quite enchanted.

"Then the young Prince of Gotha came in, and there was more chatting; and the Queen asked if I had written any new songs, and said she was very fond of singing my published ones. 'You should sing one to him,' said Prince Albert; and after a little begging, she said she would try the Fruhlings-lied in B flat, 'if it is still here,' she added; 'for all my music is packed up for Claremont.' Prince Albert went to look for it, but came back, saying it was already packed. . . . At last the Queen went herself, and while she was gone, Prince Albert said to me, 'She begs you praised his humility, and with the best conscience in the world, for just that part with the long G at the end she had done so well, taking the three following and connecting notes in the same breath, as one seldom hears it done, and therefore it aimed not doubly that she herself should have been so about it.

"Then Prince Albert sang the Aennlie-lied, 'Es ist ein Schnitter,' and then he said I must play him something before I went, and gave me his chair and the Chorale which he had played on the organ, and the song he had just sung. If everything had gone on, as usual, I ought to have improvised most dreadfully badly; for it is almost always like that with me when I want to do it well, and then I should have given away vexed with the whole morning. But not so if I was to keep nothing but the pleasantest, most charming recollection of it, I never improvised better; I was in the best mood for it, and played a long time, and enjoyed it myself; so that besides the two themes, I brought in the songs the Queen had sung naturally enough, and it all went off so easily, that I would gladly not have stopped; and they followed me with so much intelligence and attention, that I felt more at my ease than ever I did in improvising to an audience. The Queen said several times she hoped I would soon come to England again and pay them a visit. And then I took leave; and down below I saw the beautiful carriages standing with their scarlet outriders; and in a quarter of an hour the flag was lowered, and the *Court Circular* announced 'Her Majesty left the Palace at twenty minutes past three.'

This is a charming vignette of the life, so simple, so natural, so full of good tastes and occupations, of the Royal pair. The young Queen, who "put things straight" with her own hands, who was fluttered and frightened as she sang to the great composer, yet too amiable and kind to refuse; and who knew as well what she was doing even in her shyness—which has such a charm, in her position—makes a most attractive

THE ROSENAU, BIRTHPLACE OF THE PRINCE CONSORT—THE MARBLE SALOON

picture. The elder readers will remember an incident which drew public attention, many years ago, to another Art-pursuit in which Queen Victoria and her husband found a mutual interest —the story of the etchings which have been already referred to, which were one of the amusements of their busy life, and which soon busy caterer for the public managed to get clandestine hold of, and endeavoured to reproduce, counting on the interest of the British public in everything that came from the Queen. This unscrupulous attempt revealed to the world at least another pleasant chapter in the Royal life—for the etchings of the Queen and Prince were in great part drawings from their own babies; the Princess and Princesses of to-day, then small children in the nursery, and the delight of their young parents. The first little portraits, "six months," "at one year," of the little Princess Royal and Prince of Wales: happy memorandums of infancy which, to all parents, are beyond price, were the things which charmed the leisure of the Royal amateurs, and certainly there was no mother in the country, and not many fathers, who did not sympathise in this pursuit. The Prince went further than this. He painted even, in the intervals of more important work," and began a picture of the Death of Posa, from Schiller's 'Don Carlos,' making first a small sketch for it, which he did beautifully," says the Queen, with fond admiration; and he wrote songs, many of them very sweet and graceful, in which "the Queen constantly helped him in the final arrangement of the music. There was no occupation which gave her greater pleasure." And in those days, joyful days, of which the younger generation scarcely retains any recollection, Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle were full of stately gaiety and sober pomp. Kings and Princes went and came; there were shows and pageants, and bright colours, and happy movement everywhere. State visits, play-goings, play-doings; the Queen in the foreground of the national life, affecting it always for good, and setting an example of purity and virtue. The theatres to which she went, and which both she and her husband enjoyed, were purified by her presence; evils which had been the growth of years disappearing before the face of the young Queen; and her quiet and peaceful home, the abode of domestic love and harmony, became a centre of moral influence, and every good, cheerful, and pleasant thing. Where there had been jealousies and discords and perpetual strife, were now all the variations of natural piety and tenderness. For the young pair in their happiness neglected no other ties: and the Queen's mother held the honoured place she deserved, close by her child's side, going where she went, and sharing her daily existence, notwithstanding the inevitable separations of life, in a graceful independence yet union, such as seems to present the ideal constitution of a good mother's life. And children came, making every brightness brighter, binding the Queen in all her generosity to those ties of fellow feeling which make human creatures kin, and filling all the Royal dwellings with mirth and innocent youth.

We will leave to another chapter the record of events and of the public business at which both husband and wife worked hard with the steady devotion of duty; but there were serious moments in their joyful life full of that awe and chastened religious feeling which is never more truly respected than in England, and of which the nation will be glad to be reminded. "Before they approached the altar, for instance, to take part in the most solemn and sacred of religious ordinances, they were in the habit of withdrawing into solitude and religious thought and communion in a manner out of the ordinary routine of a Court. On the evening before the solemn festival of Easter next after their marriage the Royal couple remained alone in their sitting before the Vigil of the Feast, preparing for the sacred celebration, the first time they shared in it together. "The Prince," the Queen says, "had a very strong feeling, which is also mine, that we should not like to appear in company either on the evening before, or on the day." This tenderness of religious feeling must claim all sympathies, whatever differences of opinion may exist. The young couple in their retirement, all disturbing influences of society shut out, reading together about "self-knowledge" in their German book of devotion, and another week with Mozart's glorious music, is another picture of impressive simplicity and goodness, in the midst of all the pomps and pageants which were appropriate, and, indeed, necessary to their lives.

There was nothing very good, thing, from the trees round them and the beautiful slopes and glades of Windsor, which became doubly beautiful under their hands, to the events of greater importance which soon began to spring up in their home, the Queen and her husband spent their early lives. She, ever cheerful, humble, simple in the domestic interior, making light of the natural ailments and maternity, for ever watchful, tender, studious of her comfort. No one but her husband, she herself records, ever lifted the young mother from her bed to her sofa at those periods of inevitable dependence of the weaker on the stronger. Many, no doubt, are the happy young wives and mothers in England who could say the same, but it is another of those homely natural touches which make the record so pleasant. The pleasures most prized by the young pair, the delights of their own home, and as the years went on, and the home circle expanded, it became a pleasure to them to find other homes less splendid and less in the public gaze than great Windsor, beautiful and stately as that is. The seaside villa of Osborne and the little Highland Castle at Balmoral became the delightful playthings of their leisure, beloved retreats of family calm, enjoyment, and peace. The Prince had almost a passion for landscape gardening, and great skill and taste for that unambitious yet artistic art. The prettiest allusion to the "island home" where the Royal household was "wholly given up to the enjoyment of the warm summer weather;"—"the children catching butterflies, and Victoria sitting under the trees"—abound; and all the improvements made at Balmoral are described by the Queen with the warmest cordial pleasure. In later years those two private dwellings which she speaks of in his lifetime with such special affection as "entirely the creation" of her husband, have been to the Queen more dear than any other habitations, as that there has been a half grudge by times in the popular mind—one of the grudges and vexations of affection—that the chief home of English Royalty, the cradle of kings, has fallen into less importance than ought to belong to Royal Windsor, the most stately and historic of English houses. But no sentiment could be more touching or more natural.

We will notice only one more point in the private life of the Queen, the most important part of individual existence to a woman: the manner in which she fulfilled that highest natural duty and honourable office of a mother, in which best of ways so many humble women serve their country with a courage and patience beyond praise. "The children" figure perpetually in all the records. The most happy expedition has a touch of distress in leaving them behind, the State visit a touch of nature in the happy interruption of their appearance, the tedious routine of State processions and receptions a gleam of tender humour as the busy Prince or Princess is taught its lofty part, and learns to salute with baby solemnity an admiring people. "Now we are just as many as the days in the week" counts the happy little clamour out of the nursery, breaking delightfully through the ringing of bells and Royal salvos of artillery when another little brother is born. And the education of these happy children was amid all their great occupations the matter most dear to the heart both of the Queen and the Prince. No theory of education can secure perfect results, or each new generation would not strain as it does perpetually after a more perfect way. But it will interest the reader to know how seriously yet how simply Her Majesty thought of her own duty in this most important respect. "The greatest maxim of all," she writes, "is that the children should be brought up as simply and in as domestic a way as possible; that (not interfering with their lessons) they should be as much as possible with their parents, and learn to place their greatest confidence in them in all things." "It is already a hard case for me," the Queen adds, when she speaks of the pressure of public business which prevented her from giving to the little Princess Royal all the attention she wished, "that my occupations prevent me from being with her when she says her prayers"—and we may quote entire the note of instructions in respect to religious training, which the young mother of twenty-five put down for the guidance of her deputies in this important work:—

"I am quite clear that she should be taught to have great reverence for God and for religion, but that she should have the feeling of devotion and love which our Heavenly Father encourages His sorrily children to have for Him, and not one of fear and trembling; and that the thoughts of death and a after life should not be presented as in alarming and forbidding view, and that she should be made to know *as yet* no difference of creeds."

These wise and simple instructions might be adopted with advantage by many ministers less than Royal. As a lighter detail we may add the description given by the Welsh nurse of one of the Princes, quoted by Madame Bunsen, who (with a half grudge, perhaps, that she had not something more splendid to tell of) informed the amused Ambassadress that the Royal children "were kept very plain indeed; it was quite poor living; only a bit of roast meat and, perhaps, a plain pudding." The same authority, probably quite unconscious of the high compliment she was paying, pronounced Her Majesty to be "quite fit to have been a poor man's wife as well as Queen." So stands in the world a capable woman, fit for whatever duties God may send, the humblest place as full of natural dignity as the highest:—

Her office there to rear, to watch,
Hardening, as is needful to,
A little sapling the dews to bud
The generations each to each.

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN
Drawn by R. J. Lane, A.R.A., in 1854

CHAPTER V.

PUBLIC LIFE.

THE private life of the Queen has been throughout so symphetic, and has so fully embodied all that is most congenial to the English mind in the way of domestic virtue and kindness, that Her Majesty's biographer—both now and in future time—will often be tempted to forget the grander side of that existence which in its gentler details has so much that charms the mind and attracts the interest. On the high level of a throne, it is the bigger national events that are the common routine, while the graceful circumstances of individual existence are rarely known. We must not forget, however, that the account we are now giving is not that only of a model woman, passing with mingled purity and dignity through all the vicissitudes of human life, loving, wedding, bearing children, making the most illustrious home in England an ideal home, and diffusing throughout the highest rank of society an atmosphere of moral purity and lofty meaning, but at the same time of one who is the first officer of the State, the first servant, as well as the Sovereign of England, and whose life has throughout been one of conscientious duty in her public capacity. There is something curious and piquant in the aspect which public affairs receive as they appear in those portions of the Queen's Journal which have been given to the public, and in her familiar letters, all so womanly and simple in their tone, and expressing her sentiments with so much natural and spontaneous feeling. The time has passed when private letter-writers conveyed public news to their correspondents, and even when this was more the custom than now, the public news was, save when mixed with gossip, always at a distance from the common and denser life recorded as to make it evident how different was the place it held in the writer's thoughts. But the Queen's letters so clearly show those big concerns to be her daily business, perpetually close and present, that seen thus, through her eyes, they "suffer a sea-change," and even across the mists of years we become more familiarly conscious of them than when they were transacted over our head, while we looked on in the calm of distance. Few public questions, for example, have attracted more general interest, and even excitement, than the so-called Eastern Question, which has come to another exciting crisis since Queen Victoria was first called upon to consider it, and once more has concentrated upon itself all the thoughts of Europe. But we are conscious that our personal interest in it is of a very different character from that which makes the Queen say, in 1840, "I think our child ought to have besides its other name those of Turko-Egypto, as we think of nothing else." The great events which affected, or might affect, the nation, to an interesting yet far off, were in her her profession, her life, holding the place which our family affairs or our special business do to us. This is a specially Royal peculiarity which is highly interesting to the student of human nature. In something of the same way it is curious and interesting to the reader (especially to the young reader) to see how books are treated by their makers, the people whose trade and occupation it is to produce those great strains of poetry which move generations, and outlive for centuries the small existence of the poet. Politics are the occupation and profession of the Royal personages as literature is of the writer—the grandest trade of all, and the most exciting: and the record of Queen Victoria's life is one of Work, diligent and unceasing, transacted day by day, like that of him

Who binds the sheaf,
Or builds the house, or digs the grave.

Details of this serious and steady work abound in all the records. At one public crisis in the troubled year 1858 we are told that 28,000 despatches were received at the Foreign Office alone, all of which passed through the Queen's hands. The mere reading over of so big a tapers of this kind gives an amount of occupation which it is difficult to over-estimate; and when we consider that this was but one out of many branches of public affairs, some idea may be formed of the business at which day by day the Queen and her husband worked together with unerring diligence, he acting her as only to close a companion, being at the same time a man of high abilities and judgment, could. But yet, though the Prince advised, supported, and backed up the Queen in every way, he could not be her substitute. He could make the toil, so little congenial to a young woman, sweet, but he could not take it from her. And, indeed, the main effort at first of securing her right to his counsel was positive, and establishing his right to be consulted in everything, and to share with her the secrets of statesmanship, given Her Majesty's over the seas. It will have been observed, in the idyllic record of the life of the young pair which has been given in the preceding chapter, that the forenoon was given up to business, and that the Prime Minister was with the Queen almost every afternoon. It is possible that she was subject to be called upon at any moment in every political crisis, or when the world was troubled either at home or abroad. The difficulty which has been referred to, and in respect to which the Queen said playfully that her father should have the names of Turko-Egypto, was one of the first which occurred in her married life. It was a branch of the same question which is still agitating the world, yet bore a very different aspect. It was France then which was suspected of evil designs against Turkey and our road to India. Mehemet Ali, the ruler of Egypt, had rebelled against his suzerain, the Sultan, and France had taken in hand to back him up and sustain his claims, with the invasion, as avowed in the French Chamber of the time, of securing a serviceable ally in the Mediterranean, whose fleet, combined with that of the French, would balance and do away with the supremacy of England upon the seas. Our way to India then was none cumbrous and lengthened: there was no such convenience as the Suez Canal in existence, and even the Overland Route was but making into use; still, however, the consideration was dangerous, and the English Ministry had to declare that France could not be permitted to be minstress, "directly or indirectly, of the road to our Indian dominions." France, then, as other Powers have done since, aimed at nothing less than a Protectorate of the Turkish nation. How strange are the revolutions of this whirligig of Time! The danger was averted by the interposition of the four great Powers, Russia, Prussia, Austria, and England, who established themselves by Treaty in a joint Protectorate of the Turks, and foiled France

ERNEST II., DUKE OF SAXE-COBURG-GOTHA, ELDER BROTHER OF THE PRINCE CONSORT

In her deep-laid schemes. So greatly does the aspect of the world, and combinations possible to it, change in such a space as thirty years. The subject of France as being thus baffled was so great that she declared herself insulted, and the peace between England and her nearest neighbour was for a time in some jeopardy.

In those days, too, there were troubles within as well as without, such as occur periodically in the history of every nation. Deficiencies in the national revenue, paralysed trade, suffering among the people, political agitation amounting to sedition, overclouded the beginning of Her Majesty's reign; and all the pursuit to troubles abroad, in China, in the West Indies, and, most serious of all, in Afghanistan, where the English troops had fallen into a trap, and the English envoy had been murdered at Cabul—made the skies lowering and gloomy on every side. All these things, as we have said, affect us on the lower and more tranquil level of the national life comparatively little. We are sorry and indignant, and perhaps anxious, if—as once happened—we threatened, and grumble at the increased penny in the pound of a war-tax or poor-rate; but these national calamities were as individual calamities to the Queen, matters brought daily and hourly within her notice, and of which every distressing story of news, every breath of rumour, came straight to her ear. A change of Ministry, then imminent, was also a matter of very much closer interest to her than, whatever the wrench of political feeling, it can ever be to the spectators of the great national drama. To the Queen it was a very serious matter, when for the first time in her reign the Whigs went out and the Tories came in. It implied the loss from her side of her best political counsellor and guide, Lord Melbourne, who had led her first faltering steps into the ways of Royalty, and had been to her the most fatherly of friends. The Queen had been brought up in the traditions of the Whig party, and had warmly disliked the Tories, who, on their part, with no personal ill-feeling, but with the instinct of party opposition, had done much to give justification to this feeling by their factious interference in the matter of Prince Albert's allowance, and other arrangements of the same kind. The extremely natural but supremely foolish and unjustifiable feeling which had prolonged the reign of the Melbourne Administration, on an occasion already referred to, by the young Queen's refusal to part with her favourite ladies, had given very marked point of this. But growing woman and Queen as she soon became now, that one affectation from Her Majesty's serious, and made her accept the national will then, as she has always done since, with constitutional impartiality. Yet it is sufficiently well known that repeatedly, since then, Her Majesty has had to recess in the position of Prime Minister—one which involves a very large amount of personal intercourse, and in which an unsympathetic mind must be a daily and hourly weariness—men who were not agreeable to her, either in person or principles. But we believe we are saying no more than the world knows, when we add, that she has never let either prejudice or repugnance stand in the way of her Imperial duty, and has steadily upheld by public example, friend and supporter in the political leader whom she accepted loyally at the hands of the people, while herself indifferent or influenced towards him. This is not a thing which we are at all likely to take into account in estimating the difficulties of the Royal position, yet nothing could be more real, or require a greater strain of self-control. The Queen, however, proved equal with her husband's sustaining help, to the ordeal, and soon learned the lesson which experience can best teach, that political differences are of much less importance than appears, and that the national prosperity and happiness were as much the first and greatest objects with the Tory Minister as with the Whig, and so nobly pursued. It was fortunate for the young Queen that her alternative in parting with the kind, indulgent, and winning creature of Lord Melbourne was to the noble spirit, more "freely touched" to all "fine issues," of such a man as Sir Robert Peel. At one of the first acts of the new Ministry, which was the establishment of an Income Tax, by which to set right the deficient balances in the national purse, Her Majesty took one of the few independent steps which are possible to a constitutional sovereign. Although exempted, by right of her position as Head of the State, from any share in the taxes, she voluntarily paid into the exchequer in such a moment of difficulty, and claimed the right as an Englishwoman to contribute her part to this important branch of "the Queen's affairs"—an act which was not without its significance.

While all these labours were going on, and the young lady upon the throne going through an amount of business daily which only those acquainted with the unmeaning disorder of official life could fully estimate, she was at the same time subject to dangers which are unknown in private life, and which even the highest officials are only exposed to at rare times in their two years after her marriage the young, innocent, and virtuous woman, so attractive to all who surrounded her, so free of all personal errors or disadvantages, so popular and beloved as she was, was shot at in the peaceful streets of her own cheerful and unwilling London. That the offenders were contemptible in the highest degree did not make the danger to the outrage less, for a bullet from the hand of a fool may do as much as which all the wisdom of the wise could not make; and the shock and pain of alarm but of disappointment likely to be produced upon a sensitive young mind by such incidents was naturally very great. The first of these attempts took place in June, 1840, only a few months after the Queen's marriage, when a man named Edward Oxford fired at the Queen when she was driving down Constitution Hill for her daily airing. The Royal couple were in a small phaeton, going to pay their visit of visit to the Duchess of Kent, in all the simplicity and convenience of their private life. Prince Albert having his wife through the peaceful stillness of the summer evening. "We had hardly proceeded a hundred yards from the Palace when I noticed," Prince Albert says, "on the footpath, on my side a little mean-looking man, looking somewhat towards us; and before I could distinguish what it was, a shot was fired which almost stunned us both, it was so loud, and had surely not passed from us. Victoria had just turned to the left to look at a horse, and could not understand why her ears were ringing, as, from its being so very near, she could hardly distinguish that it proceeded from a shot having been fired. The horses started, and the carriage stopped. I seized Victoria's hand, and asked if the bright had not shaken her, but she laughed at the thing. I then looked again at the man, who was still standing in the same place, his arms crossed, and a pistol in each hand. His attitude was so theatrical and affected, it quite amused me. Suddenly he again pointed his pistol and fired a second time. This time Victoria also saw the shot, and stooped quickly, drawn down by me. The ball must have passed just above her head."

This was not a pleasant feature in an afternoon drive. The Queen, however, continued her course undismayed, with the cheerful and simple courage natural to her, and went on to her mother to carry the first news of the outrage, and set all anxiety at rest as to its effect. Afterwards "we took a short drive through the Park, partly to give Victoria a little air, partly also to show the public we had not lost confidence in them." The Queen at the time was in a state of health such as is often affected seriously by a very much smaller matter, but her sound nerves and high spirits defended her better than armour of mail. The wretched culprit was a dissipated lad of seventeen, apparently moved by nothing more serious than depraved vanity and desire to be notorious. It is not even certain whether there was a bullet in the pistol he fired, and the convenient plea of insanity was brought in to save England from the bathos of executing such a being for high treason. Only the other day, during the sitting of the Commission on Lunatic Asylums, it was mentioned that this pitiful criminal was still regarding among the madmen, more respectable in their real misery than he—but not insane—"as sane as any of us," the doctor said who spoke of him. A life's imprisonment is perhaps on the whole, even to the meanest spirit, as hard a punishment as one swift hanging once for all.

Two years later, at very nearly the same place, and the same time of the year, a still more exciting incident of the same kind occurred. Prince Albert was, in the middle of the day on Sunday, on the return from church, "a man step out from the crowd and present a pistol full. He was some two paces from us. I heard the trigger snap, but it must have missed fire. I turned to Victoria, who was seated on my right, and asked, 'Did you hear that?' She had been bowing to the people on the right, and had heard nothing. I said, 'I may be mistaken, but I am sure I saw some one take aim at us.'" Nothing was said publicly, however, on the subject. No one among the Queen's immediate attendants had observed it, and the Prince, though he informed the police and the Minister, was half disposed to believe that he had himself been deceived. However, during the Sunday afternoon several corroborations turned up. A boy who was among the crowd had seen the incident, and had seen and spoken to a third spectator, who also perceived it. This was enough to set the police and authorities in activity, and the vague danger thus known to exist conveyed a certain excitement into the Palace. "We were unusually much agitated, Victoria very nervous and unwell," says Prince Albert. Notwithstanding, the Queen went out for her daily drive as usual, though such precautions as could be taken were adopted. "You may imagine," continues the narrative, "that our minds were not very easy. We looked behind every tree, and I cast my eyes round in search of the rascal's face. . . . On our way home, as we were approaching the Palace, between the Green Park and the garden wall, a shot was fired at us about five paces off. It was the fellow with the same pistol—a little, swarthy, ill-looking rascal. We felt as if a load had been taken off our hearts, and we thanked the Almighty for having preserved us for a second time from so great a danger." "Her Majesty told me she had expected it, and it was a relief to her to have it over," says another witness. "She said she could not have existed under the uncertainty of a concealed attack. She would much rather run the risk at once than have the presentiment of danger constantly hovering over her." The madman on this occasion was another wretched creature called Francis, equally without any motive or inducement which could account for such a piece of cruel and cowardly folly. A month afterwards, just after the trial of Francis, a third incident of the same kind occurred, a debauched man called Bean being the culprit. The cumulation in itself must have had a very painful effect on the Queen's mind, since nothing worse could have occurred to the most hated despot than the repeated shootings which threatened the most popular and beloved of Queens. The first of the three gave his interpretation of it afterwards with great shrewdness. "If I had been hanged," said Oxford, "there would have been no more shooting at the Queen." The original criminal evidently had the same impression. "I was not at all frightened," the Queen wrote to her uncle, "and feel very proud at dear Uncle Mendoff calling me 'sehr tapfer' (very courageous), which I shall ever remember with peculiar pride, coming from so distinguished a soldier as he is." Thus the Queen gave proof of her valour under fire—not the less so indeed that her enemies were so contemptible, and all the greater as without excitement or encouragement, a danger encountered not in passion, but in cold blood.

The young lady's Royal calm is charmingly contrasted with the emotion of her Minister, Sir Robert Peel—but generally a demonstrative man—when, on seeing her for the first time after this third attempt, could not restrain his feelings but burst into tears—tears as honourable to him as her steady nerves and bravery were to the young Sovereign—only twenty-three, with all the susceptibilities of a young mother, and all the happiness of a most happy wife, endearing her existence to her.

Shortly after this period the deplorable complication of affairs in India came to an end. Cabul was taken, the British captives delivered, and British honour vindicated. As soon as the news was brought to the Queen, she and her husband immediately set about devising honours for the troops to whom this re-establishment of credit and glory was due. This was not a grateful and in every shape a public duty. And as were the State visits which she began in the following year by an expedition to France to make acquaintance with the Royal family there, such a thing Her Majesty had, however, communicated through her uncle of Belgium, and her cousins of the House of Coburg. The visits of Kings and Queens to each other have become common enough and familiar to us nowadays, but they were then much more rare and unusual; and there was some excitement in the expedition, which took a Queen of England to the shores of France, where her predecessors had gone as conquerors, there to be welcomed with enthusiasm as a friend by the people with whom, both before and after, the title of a Norman descendant of gentlemen Adam had been, and was to be, popular enough. The Queen was too sensible and too courageous to indulge any flutters of doubt on the subject, and the whole excursion was managed with the greatest success, and afforded the most thorough gratification to all concerned. The Queen herself gives in the first volume of the "Life of the Prince Consort" an account of this visit, which is full of character and animation. King Louis Philippe and his family appear there in their most amiable and charming aspects; but indications are not wanting that the Queen's fine observation had perceived something of the affluent and over-amiable bonhomie that was in that Parisianlit of monarchs. The saintly goodness of his Queen, and the admirable character of several of his sons and daughters were, however, above all doubt, and it is evident that Her Majesty found herself with a surprised delight in the bosom of a family of her equals—the guest of a reigning House not precisely of her own, and of a nation which had trodden step by step (though far from amicably) with England in the way of civilisation and social progress. Nothing could be more charming than the simple and frank narrative. "The effect which the excursion has produced is excellent," Prince Albert wrote to his correspondents in Germany. "The French were delighted and astonished . . . and the public here are thoroughly satisfied with the excursion. Newspaper reporters were in Eu, who reported everything in the minutest detail. Lord Broughton wrote to me yesterday to congratulate Victoria and myself on the admirable effect produced by the late excursion to France, and on the sure tendency of this wise measure to create the best feelings between the two nations." This was the first of a series of visits to and from England which mingled in the happiest way the cordiality of private intercourse with important national events.

H.R.H. THE PRINCE CONSORT
From the Picture by W. Allan

LOUIS PHILIPPE, KING OF THE FRENCH
Born 1773, Died 1850

MARIE AMELIE, LOUIS-PHILIPPE'S CONSORT
Born 1782, Died 1866

"Little passed of a political nature," the Prince adds, "except the declaration of Louis Philippe to Aberdeen that he will not give his son to Spain, even if he were asked; and Aberdeen's answer that, excepting one of his sons, any applicant whom Spain might choose would be acceptable to England." This pledge, very soon to be broken, led to a personal remonstrance on the part of the Queen of the most spirited and admirable kind, to which we will come further on.

A visit from the Emperor of Russia (Nicholas) was the next incident of this kind, and had a still more distinct political character. Already there was talk of Turkey falling into pieces, and the great potentate of the North felt it necessary to make protestations on the subject. "I do not want," he said, "one inch of Turkish soil for myself, but neither will I allow anybody else to have one." This was evidently an allusion to the French interposition in favour of Mehemet Ali, and some idea of drawing England from France seemed to be among the objects of the visitor. In the present state of affairs it may be interesting to quote one or two of Her Majesty's clear-sighted observations upon this special visitor, though it is difficult without quoting the letters entire to give any idea of the admirable and animated picture of the stranger which is conveyed by the details she gives, always with the complete simplicity and absence of any strain which distinguishes her. "He is very much alarmed about the East and about Austria," says the Queen. "He is, I should say, too frank, for he talks so openly before people, which he should not do, and with difficulty restrains himself." His anxiety to be believed is very great, and I must say his personal promises I am inclined to believe." The events which proved this confidence to be ill-founded were unfortunately soon to come.

The country, however, with which at this period our alliance was most doubtful was France, with whom another difficulty arose on a question about Tahiti, long ago passed from the public recollection. France had assumed a protectorate over the South Sea Islands which led to some altogether trifling but irritating quarrels. "The only thing almost to mar our happiness is the heavy and threatening cloud which hangs over our relations with France, and which distresses and alarms us sadly." Her Majesty writes in 1844, "the whole nation here are very angry." The danger blew over, however, and Louis Philippe paid a return visit to the Queen, which excited a great deal of interest in England. "At two o'clock he arrived, this curious King; worth seeing if ever a lucky was," writes Lady Lyttelton. "The Queen having graciously permitted me to be present, I joined the Court in the corridor, and we waited an hour, and then the Queen of England came out of her room to go and receive the King of France the first time in history. . . . From the Armoury, amidst all the old trophies and knights' armour, and Nelson's coat, and Marlborough's flag, and Wellington's flag, we saw the first of the escort enter the quadrangle, and then flew the Queen, and we after her, to the outside of the door on the pavement of the quadrangle." The Armoury here described is ornamented with a small French flag on each side, renewed every year, the presentation of which forms the legal quittance paid by the Dukes of Marlborough and Wellington for Blenheim and Strathfieldsaye. These are objects which would not, we presume, be specially suited to the French King's notice, emblems of victory as they were. The corridor above mentioned runs round three sides of the quadrangle, and is one of the most striking features in the modern part of Windsor Castle. The French King's visit was very successful and agreeable. He was admired by the multitude as a King who had once worked for his living and had his own boots could scarcely fail to be; and he went with great interest to all the places he had known in his previous visit to England in his lowliness, and—together unwitting what was before him—to Claremont, where, though he did not know it, his life was to end—but not without his own fault.

Events, however, were going on at home of still more importance and interest than these Royal visits, and the passing agitation of national susceptibilities now and then, and vague threats of international disturbance which happily came to nothing. One remarkable, we believe unparalleled, feature in the Royal receptions just described is, however, worth noticing in any biographical sketch of the Queen—a fact which was stated by the Prime Minister in his place in Parliament to the honour of Her Majesty and her wise and noble husband. "Two of the most powerful sovereigns in the habitable globe," Sir Robert Peel said, had paid visits of State to England; but not one farthing had been asked from England for the expenses of their entertainment. "These visits of necessity created a considerable increase of expenditure; but, through that wise system of economy which is the only source of true magnificence, Her Majesty was enabled to meet every charge, and to give a reception to these Sovereigns which struck every one by its magnificence without adding one farthing to the burdens of the country. I am not required," the Minister added, "to pass for the extra expenditure of one shilling on account of these unforeseen causes of increased expenditure. I think that to state this is only due to the personal credit of Her Majesty, who insists upon it that there shall be every magnificence required by her station, but without incurring a single debt."

This was a wonderful contrast to the habits of the last generation of Royalty, which was never out of debt, and constantly making calls, with no particular reason, upon the liberality of the nation. Stormy times were coming, however, in politics, and in the internal history of the nation. The discussion upon the Corn Laws sent the country wild, and filled England with hot controversy; and this was pushed to a decision by the horrible calamities of the Irish famine. The wise and able statesman at the head of affairs felt himself bound, at the expense of any prejudices and preferences of his own, and of many important losses to his Government, to adopt Free Trade principles, and to abolish the Corn Laws and the principle of Protection. Through out this long and serious conflict the Queen kept her constitutional place in a way which all acknowledged. She had been very reluctant to replace the Whigs, who were the friends of her youth, by a Conservative Ministry, but having got over that early difficulty Her Majesty's excellent sense and sympathetic heart had soon learned to do justice to the patriotism and fine character of Sir Robert Peel. We may instance an incident most graceful on the part of the Queen, most creditable to both parties, which occurred at one of the critical points of the great Minister's career. Anxious to show him some special honour, it occurred to Her Majesty to offer the much-budgeted Premier that bit of ribbon which makes

AFTER THE WEDDING, FEBRUARY 10, 1840—DRIVING TO WINDSOR
"Almost all the way the road was lined and thronged by spectators, twenty-two miles of it, every soul turning out from the towns and villages."

the highest hearts beat, and which is, perhaps, the most highly prized honour which an English Sovereign can bestow. The Queen proposed, with the most delicate and generous feeling, to give Sir Robert the Order of the Garter. In the same spirit of generous high-mindedness the Minister declined this highest of social distinctions. "He sprang from the people," he is reported to have said, "and was essentially of the people. His heart was not set upon titles of honour." Nothing could be more honourable to both than such a negotiation. No knight of the highest Order on earth ever served his country with more honour and devotion, and no Sovereign was ever more imperial yet more cordial in perception of merit which was above all rubies material recompense.

The next public event which called for the Queen's personal interposition was the affair so fatal to France, or at least to the existence and character of the Orleans family in France, the melancholy transaction known as "the Spanish Marriages." Queen Isabella of Spain, and her sister the Infanta, had reached an age at which, though girls of other ranks are still in the school-room, Queens and Princesses are sometimes called upon to marry; and Europe was concerned to find fit husbands for these two unfortunate though highly placed ladies. There were many candidates, among whom the Duke of Montpensier, a son of Louis Philippe, had been mentioned for the younger sister. The King, however, had declared himself in the most distinct manner on this point, pledging himself, indeed, to permit no such union, at least until after the satisfactory marriage of the Queen of Spain and birth of an heir to the throne. The issue is well known. Instead of keeping this promise the too skilful head of the Orleans family, aided by the generally virtuous and conscientious Guizot, by some curious moral aberration which it is difficult to understand, pitched upon most unsuitable and unappropriate marriage for the young Queen, and married the Infanta to the Duke of Montpensier, thus placing a son of Prince next in succession to the throne of Spain. With the curious diplomacy which is sometimes used in families, but seldom in the larger world, the head of the old Queen, whose reputation and name enforced respect everywhere, was employed to make this arrangement known to Queen Victoria and her Ministers, and on the receipt of the significantly cold acknowledgment of this momentous news, Louis Philippe made another good and genial woman, Queen Louise of Belgium, the wife of King Leopold, the medium of his explanations, professing to be extremely distressed by the dissatisfaction of "notre bonne petite Reine," who, he says, "sees only through the spectacles of Lord Palmerston," and giving a most plausible and prolonged explanation of his motives and actions. We are very fond of good-natured persons, and laugh the letter in which Queen Victoria replied. The "good little Queen," whom the experienced Royal plotter had thought it so easy to overcome with a display of specious arguments, showed herself as superior to his plausible assumptions as to his dangerous arts, and there can be no doubt as to which Sovereign came best, even intellectually, out of the encounter. The disinterested desire of England for the best issue possible in view of Spanish interests, and the tricky plausibility of the French King, beat no encoiling himself, and deftly screwing himself by no doing, come out most distinctly in this remarkable correspondence, which the reader will find in its original form in an appendix to the first volume of Sir Theodore Martin's "Life of the Prince Consort," and which is well worth his attention.

HER MAJESTY IN ST. GEORGE'S CHAPEL, WINDSOR, 1846
From the Painting by H. E. Dawe

Two years later, the Royal cousin, who had used his powers to make the worse appear the better cause, and who had been so signally defeated in the effort by the "good little Queen," whose union never yielded though her heart was always soft to the family she loved—was a fugitive seeking hospitality and shelter from the young pair whom he had vainly tried to beguile, but who were wholly ready to succour him. The state of affairs on the Continent in the terrible crisis of 1848 was at once the cause of the deepest concern and alarm, and of the most lofty confidence to the English Queen: the alarm was for others, for friends, relatives, members of the little band of Royal personages between whom a certain community of feeling must always exist—but of absolute confidence for herself and her own immediate family. To us the members of the House of Orleans, so lately her happy and splendid hosts, "coming in on one by one, like people shipwrecked." "Exiles in flames, helpless as usual, and the Revolution spreading everywhere, was no small trial. Everywhere almost where the eyes could be turned some fresh was threatened, some throne tottering, and it was impossible to tell how far the contagion of war and revolt might spread. The Queen speaks of "this terrible anxiety" with a thrill of genuine feeling. "We have had since the 23th (of February) enough for a whole life—anxiety, sorrow, excitement, in short, I feel so if we had jumped over thirty years' experience at once. The whole face of Europe is changed, and I feel as if I lived in a dream." Even the breach between herself and the family of Louis Philippe, which had severed them for a time, made her reception of them more tender now, and her sympathy more profound. "How little did I dream that this would be the way we should meet again," she says.

The wretchedness of the crisis came still more closely home to the safe and happy Royal House in England when Germany took fire, and "our little Coburg" even, unprotected by its obscurity, shared the general fury. "How can one be happy when he sees and hears of such misery all round?" the Queen asks. "The poor Hohenlohes and Charles Leiningen (the Queen's sister and brother) have suffered much. And then those poor exiles at Claremont! Their life, their future, breaks one's heart to think of." While thus moved by sorrow for others, the Queen was herself passing through one of those crises in a woman's life when emotion of every kind is most deeply felt. The Princess Louise was born in March, in the midst of all these troubles. But nothing shook the courage and calmness of the young mother. "From the first," Her Majesty says, "I heard all that passed, and my only thought and talk was politics. But I never was calmer and quieter or less nervous. *Great events make me calm.* It is only trifles that irritate my nerves."

It is not to be supposed, however, that the Queen's sympathies, warm as they were, were carried into injudicious partisanship. Before it was known what the fate of the old King and Queen of France was, when they were still wandering, and curiosity, as well as sympathy, deeply excited in respect to them, the Queen made a very distinct separation between personal sympathy and political support. "We do everything we can for the poor family, who are, indeed, nearly to be pitied," she wrote to King Leopold as early as March 1st. "But you will naturally understand that we cannot make *cause commune* with them, and cannot take a hostile position to the new state of affairs in France. We leave them alone, but if a Government which has the support of the country be formed, we shall feel it necessary to recognise it in order to pin them down to maintain peace and the existing treaties, which is of the greatest importance. It will not be pleasant to do this, but the public good and the peace of Europe go before one's personal feelings."

The crisis of possible revolution through which England too passed was brief and trifling enough, but what with the contagion of terror on the Continent, and the alarming numbers of the Chartist demonstration which was understood to be preparing, the peaceable inhabitants in London suffered a fright. The story has been often told, and quite lately has been given at length, both from the Royal side, on the part of the Prince Consort, and from the other side of the question—that of the eye of spectators most loyal, yet warmly sympathetic with the incipient revolutionaries, in the "Memorials of Charles Kingsley." On the 10th of April in this eventful year the Chartists assembled on Kennington Common, with the intention publicly announced of marching *en masse* to the House of Commons, all across London, and there presenting their petition that the Charter might be made the law of the land. The numbers to be called together were estimated at 150,000, and, naturally, the possible invasion of such a multitude into the richest of cities was very alarming to the peaceful inhabitants who had just been spectators of the wild work on the other side of the Channel. The excitement with which Mr. Kingsley, believing earnestly in the sincerity of the movement, rushed up to town to persuade and exhort and restrain these peaceful rebels, is proof of the impression made upon the general mind. And the Government felt itself called upon to take the utmost precautions. As many as 170,000 special constables were sworn in—anxious volunteers from all classes of society—a very sufficient evidence of the soundness of the national feeling. Besides, it was known that all the public buildings were occupied by troops and artillery ready to interpose if they were needed. "But not a soldier nor a piece of artillery shall you see unless in actual need," said the Duke of Wellington. They were never called upon. The meeting at Kennington Common was neither 150,000, as the procession was to have been, nor 500,000, as its leaders promised it should be, but less than a sixth part of the smaller number. The petition found its way to the House of Commons in the ordinary way, supported by no monster procession. The troops moved away unseen as they had come, nobody being the wiser, and the only people "out" were the special constables, whom *Punch* chaffed with salutary jokes, and the country, after its worst, half laughed at, half applauded. They were the chief point in the performance; so that it looks half absurd now to hear that other people were even more in earnest than the special constables, and that young Mr. Kingsley, from his Rectory, could not be happy without printing placards and addressing meetings to bring back those sanguinary revolutionaries to the right way. The whole affair was a "triumph of discretion," as Sir Robert Peel called it, with little opportunities.

CHRISTMAS EVE AT WINDSOR CASTLE—THE QUEEN'S CHRISTMAS TREE
From the Picture by J. Roberts in Her Majesty's Private Collection

Prince Alfred The Prince of Wales Princess Alice Princess Helena The Princess Royal

THE QUEEN AND THE PRINCE CONSORT AND THE ROYAL FAMILY

FROM THE PAINTING BY F. WINTERHALTER

THE GREAT EXHIBITION OF 1851—THE VIEW OF THE EXHIBITION BUILDINGS FROM THE SERPENTINE

"We had our revolution yesterday, and it ended in smoke," Prince Albert wrote. A more wonderful contrast to the universal Continental commotion could not have been.

This danger, however, so happily surmounted, was not the worst, or even the most real, of the difficulties which threatened the country. Shortly after the agitations of the abortive revolutions were over the Prince wrote to Germany that "commerce is at a standstill," and that the prospects of the revenue were gloomy. "Believe me, I am often very sad," the Queen wrote. There were real evils enough abroad, if not in the way of politics, and in Ireland the factious party kept the country agitated and exhausted as it was by the terrific scenes of the Famine, in a perpetual commotion. This, however, was partially brought to a conclusion by the trial and sentence of Mitchell and Meagher, and in the year 1849 Ireland was so far tranquillised that it was possible for the Queen to try the pleasant expedient of a visit there, which she had long desired to make. To spare the impoverished country the expense of a State visit, the expedition was made to bear the air of "a yachting excursion," and the Queen, though it is apparent from her Journals that the sea was but a doubtful pleasure to her, made the voyage to Cork, and entered Ireland at that point. Nothing could have been more triumphant than the success of this visit, at which many loyal hearts trembled; but the Irish, with their fine sense of hospitality, and that imaginative perception of which Celtic races have the privilege, were the last people in the world to spoil the delight of such a visit by any reminiscences of sedition, and the impression made upon the country on one side, and the Royal travellers on the other, was all that could be desired. No portion of the Queen's dominions showed itself more loyal or more enthusiastic than did Ireland when the Sovereign landed herself within its shores. And the confidence given was not a grudging one, for the Queen was not alone, but accompanied by all her children who were old enough for such a voyage. Her Majesty paid a second visit to Ireland in 1861. It seems a thing to be regretted that an experiment so highly successful should not have been tried again. But Her Majesty was by this time on the very edge of the sorrow which rent her life in twain, and had no longer the courage to undertake great expeditions. The Queen had by this time acquired her home in the Highlands, which is referred to in a former chapter, and which established a still closer connection between her and Scotland; but as this was a connection never threatened by any seditious agitation, or in which any thrill of excitement or alarm was possible, there is less need to dwell upon it. There has been no fluctuation in the loyalty of Scotland throughout all the Queen's cares.

It was shortly after this period that the first idea of the Great Exhibition entered the Prince's mind, an idea which as greatly excited the country, and, it may be said, the world, and in which the Queen went fully with her husband, as she did in every conception of his fertile and active mind. It has been often and erroneously said that this idea of the Exhibition was something like a flourish of trumpets in the face of Fate, a boast and bravado of the armies of the world against all those demons of war which had been so long chained and silent. But there had been agitation in all the firmament around and doubt and excitement enough even in England, to make this view much less plausible than it appears on the outside. Not very long before our own horizon had been troubled by a cloud on account of some trifling and altogether insignificant difficulties with Greece, caused by the claims made by a British subject and a Portuguese, for compensation of some losses they had suffered—too trifling to be worth entering upon now—but which raised a very great commotion at the time, Greece appealing to France and Russia for protection against the violent pressure put upon her by England for the satisfaction of those private and very exhorbitant demands. This arbitrary and unnecessary exercise of British power brought the Foreign Secretary, Lord Palmerston, into general disfavour for the moment. No man has ever lived who has called forth warmer expressions of public feeling. He was long the most popular of Ministers at home, but he was the most unpopular of Ministers abroad, and regarded by his Continental contemporaries with almost universal hatred, not unmingled by fear—a state of feeling not always disagreeable to the nation, whose representative produced so sensational an impression upon the mind of the world. To the Queen, however, unilaterally impartial as she had been for years, and holding the balance of her constitutional duties with the steadiest hand, the proceedings of this brilliant and reckless Minister were always trying, and often directly offensive. In foreign affairs the individual position of a Sovereign is much more likely to be affected unfavourably by want of wisdom and courtesy, even in the form of pecuniary employed, than it can be at home. The Queen had shown herself nobly impartial in all the commotions of the Continent, never attempting to use her great power and *prestige* in favour of her Royal friends, much as she privately felt for them in their troubles, but forestalling all advice and diplomatic caution by at once maintaining, as has been seen, the necessity for accepting the decisions of other nations in their own affairs; but it was her constitutional right to be consulted, to know everything that was being done, and thus to keep in harmony with the proceedings which were taken in her name. Lord Palmerston, however, used as he was to carrying things with a high hand, and as lusty as he was brilliant, transgressed the accustomed usages in many points, giving grave offence to Her Majesty. As we have called attention to her strict observance of her constitutional position, and absolute impartiality, both in respect to parties at home and complications abroad, it is necessary to the full understanding of the Queen's character to notice here that this came from no mere compliance of temper, but that when

THE GREAT EXHIBITION, 1851
FROM A DRAWING BY OWEN JONES

NAPOLEON III., EMPEROR OF THE FRENCH
Born 1808. Died 1873

EUGENIE, EX-EMPRESS OF THE FRENCH

NICHOLAS I., CZAR OF RUSSIA
Born 1796. Died 1855

her own rights were assailed she knew how to defend them with spirit and dignity. After various attempts to set matters right in a milder way, Her Majesty was at last moved to recall Lord Palmerston formally and distinctly to a sense of what was due to her. The letter which she wrote on this subject has been spoken of in the "Life of Lord Palmerston" as "a paper written in anger by a lady as well as a Sovereign," but we think the impartial reader will feel it to be a very dignified statement of what Her Majesty had a right to expect, and indeed to exact. The brief stipulations of this letter are as modest as they are dignified. The Queen writes as follows:—

"With reference to the conversation about Lord Palmerston which the Queen had with Lord John Russell the other day . . . . she thinks it right, in order to prevent any mistake in the future, to explain what it is she expects from the Foreign Secretary.

"She requires:—

"1. That he will distinctly state what he proposes in a given case, in order that the Queen may know as distinctly to what she has given her Royal sanction.

"Having once given her sanction to a measure, that it be not subsequently altered or modified by the Minister. Such an act she must consider to be a failure in sincerity towards the Crown. . . . .

She expects to be kept informed of what passes between him and the Foreign Ministers before important decisions are taken based upon that intercourse, to receive the foreign despatches in good time, and to have the drafts for her approval sent to her in sufficient time to make herself acquainted with their contents before they are sent off."

It cannot be supposed that this would be a very palatable document to an all-powerful Minister used to wielding the Empire very much at his own discretion—and sometimes, perhaps, without much discretion at all; but it is a vindication of the reality of the Queen's position as having an actual part in the great affairs of the world, and being not merely a puppet of State called to sanction, as by the waving of a wand, proceedings with which she had nothing to do—which is necessary to the full understanding both of Her Majesty's character and place. From after this, however, it was not always possible to restrain the hasty impulses of the imperious Minister, though as time went on, and he in his turn became Prime Minister (and the favourite of the nation), the usual effect of time and intercourse seem to have drawn the Royal Mistress and the powerful subject into the usual suitable relations.

Another event which disturbed this period was the agitation raised in England by the Pope's brief re-establishing with all the old territorial titles the Roman Catholic hierarchy in England. How far this commotion was reasonable we are, perhaps, scarcely qualified now to say; for distance, which so often shows the real pettiness of the fears of the moment, is apt at the same time to obliterate with its haze a great many weighty but secondary circumstances which made the popular emotion quite reasonable. The Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, shortly after passed, with great difficulty and much Ministerial trouble, though by great majorities, was of small eventual importance; but the indignation and determined resistance of the country to any re-assertion of the Papal authority were fully shown by the immediate movement which took place in the shape of public meetings, addresses to the House, and a universal protest made by almost every tongue or pen which had weight in England. The Queen fully joined in the feeling, but even at this height expressed herself with a kindness and charity which might have been an example to many. "Sincerely Protestant as I have always been, and always shall be," she says, "and indignant as I am at those who call themselves Protestants, though they are in fact quite the contrary, I much regret the unchristian and intolerant spirit exhibited by many people at the public meetings. I cannot bear to hear the violent abuse of the Catholic religion, which is so painful and so cruel towards the many good and innocent Roman Catholics. However, we must hope and trust that this excitement

THE SCOTCH FUSILIER GUARDS PARADING BEFORE HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN AND THE PRINCE CONSORT ON THE MORNING OF THEIR EMBARKATION FOR THE CRIMEA, FEB. 28, 1854.

FROM THE PICTURE BY GEORGE H. THOMAS IN HER MAJESTY'S PRIVATE COLLECTION

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN REVIEWING THE FLEET AT SPITHEAD BEFORE ITS DEPARTURE FOR THE BALTIC, AUGUST 11, 1854.
FROM THE PICTURE BY J. C. SCHETKY IN HER MAJESTY'S PRIVATE COLLECTION

THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON III. AND THE PRINCE CONSORT AT BOULOGNE, SEPTEMBER 7, 1854.
FROM THE PICTURE BY GEORGE H. THOMAS IN HER MAJESTY'S PRIVATE COLLECTION.

will soon cease, and that the wholesome effect of it upon our own Church will be lasting." This was, however, one of the cases in which the immediate outbreak of public feeling was in reality the only thing wanted, or from which any good could result. It showed all parties that England was not on the way to Rome, as had been loudly supposed; but legislation on the subject was scarcely possible.

We have, however, made a digression from the subject named above—the Great Exhibition—which, as we have already said, was so entirely the creation of the Prince Consort, that it became beyond measure delightful and engrossing to the Queen—to whom what he did was at all times more interesting than anything else in the world. Perhaps she was the only individual in her kingdom who certainly knew how much he laboured for his adopted country. But here, at least, was one thing which no one else could appropriate, which was all his from beginning to end. To say that we have got tired since then of Great Exhibitions is no reproach to the first, which was nothing less than a revelation to the world; and which remains to this time not only as a splendid precedent fruitful in results, but as something like a pledge of peaceful intention among the nations—a universal overture of brotherhood, not always followed just as it should be, but always bearing more or less the same meaning. The Exhibition of 1851 was carried out only by the determined work and unfailing energy of the Prince, who stood fast against all dissensions, and overcame every obstacle with firmness, good-humour, and perseverance beyond praise. After every kind of discouragement and opposition the work was finished at last, and by the greatest good fortune the building itself was as unique as the idea, and the spectacular effect produced of the most successful and striking kind. It was a Fairy Palace of Industry and Taste, where even genius did not disdain to dwell, and where wealth and art came together in a way which has borne good fruit ever since, and given a new stimulus to many a branch of skilled labour and the higher handicrafts, as well as the higher interests of trade. The Queen, who had followed every step of the project with unfailing interest, made a visit to it two days before the opening, which filled her with the keenest delight. "We remained two hours and a-half," she said, "and I came back quite buzzed, and my head bewildered from the myriads of beautiful and wonderful things which have quite dazzle one's eyes. Such crowds have been inside, and our people have shown such taste in their manufactures. All owing to this Great Exhibition, and to Albert—*all to him!*" Even at this last moment fears of trouble were in the minds of many important persons. The dread of foreign revolutionaries, with murderous projects, stirring up incipient elements of evil in England (though no one knew what) disturbed the mind of the public, to whom the sight of so many foreign faces

H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES ACCOMPANYING HER MAJESTY AT THE DECORATION OF THE CRIMEAN WOUNDED IN 1856

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN DISTRIBUTING MEDALS TO THE HEROES FROM THE CRIMEA ON THE HORSE GUARDS' PARADE, MAY 21, 1855

FROM THE PAINTING BY GEORGE H. THOMAS, IN BUCKINGHAM PALACE

was unfamiliar. Even Princes of the Blood were, as the Queen who knew better says, "in no inconsiderable tension about the great ceremonial of the opening." It is unnecessary to say now that the Queen was right in judging, as she had so good a right to do, her people by herself. And Her Majesty's account of this great undertaking, of the solemnity of the opening, and all the proceedings to which she herself was the chief actor, are, like all she writes, most animated and graphic, giving a simple and most lifelike account of all that was passing under her eyes. "I was rather tired," she says at the conclusion of this wonderful day, "but we were both so happy, so full of thankfulness." In and throughout all, this triumph was specially dear as being that of her husband. "The proudest and happiest day of my happy life," she calls it, as being full of "the glory of his dear name, united with the glory of my dear country." Every word the Queen writes on this subject is aglow with sacred pride and generous joy.

Though it belongs rather to the private than the public side of life, yet we cannot refrain from quoting while on this subject a charming letter written by the Queen during this same summer, when the sunshine of universal praise and acknowledgment of the Prince's excellence had evidently gone to her heart. It is addressed to Lord John Russell, who had praised a speech made at the Jubilee for the Propagation of the Gospel by Prince Albert. The Queen thanks him for his applause, adding an acknowledgment that the subject was a difficult one, and the appreciation of the audience tangible :—

"At the same time the Queen felt sure that the Prince would say the right thing from her entire confidence in his great tact and judgment. The Queen, at the risk of not appearing sufficiently modest (and yet why should a wife ever be modest about her husband's merits?), must say that she thinks Lord John Russell will admit now that the Prince is possessed of very extraordinary powers of mind and heart. She feels so proud of being his wife that she cannot refrain from herself paying a tribute to his noble character."

The generous and tender effusiveness of this letter is delightful, and beyond praise. The same summer, on returning from a ball at the Guildhall, which they did not leave till after one o'clock in the morning, the Royal pair found the streets still full of people waiting for them, who made "the dead of night" gay with their applause. "A million of people remained till three on the streets," the Prince writes. "How few Sovereigns have ever had such a true compliment paid them!"

It seems scarcely right to omit all mention of the painful shadow to this bright-ness which arose shortly before the Crimean War by the publication of most painful reports about the influence of the Prince, whom his enemies endeavoured to represent as being inimical to the progress of liberty throughout the world, and the friend of reactionary movements and absolute Government. It seems to us, looking back, as if these accusations could be nothing but the most contemptible gossip, but they were evidently not so regarded by the Queen, to whom they were one of the real griefs of her life, which up to this time had been a very happy life. It is easy to understand that one who had triumphed to the general acknowledgment of the Prince's high qualities and powers would feel beyond any other the cruel and miserable injustice which thus assailed him. To so violent a pitch did these reports rise that the Prince himself writes to Germany of crowds assembled round the Tower to see him carried there to prison as a traitor. This did not, however, prevent the public from cheering the Royal pair vigorously when they went to the opening of Parliament, even before the complete vindication of the Prince from all charges, and the public announcement and recognition of the part he had taken in politics since his marriage, which took place there. The cloud was but a passing cloud, but it was very near to the Queen, as may be supposed, and in this way she, too, had to pay one of the common penalties of humanity, happy and prosperous and guarded from evil as had hitherto been her lot.

This agitation immediately preceded the great national event of the Crimean War, a war which had changed the aspect of international affairs in many respects. In the previous years the relations of England and France had often been in the most precarious balance. On several occasions moments occurred at which one injudicious step—almost even one injudicious word—might have brought about a direct collision between two nations which could do more grievous harm to each other than any other possible belligerents, and whose amity is one of the best pledges of advancing civilisation. The war in the Crimea saw France and England for the first time fighting side by side against a common enemy. So far back, indeed, as the days of the Crusaders, the two near neighbours and ancient enemies had moved together with sufficiently evil grace against "the foe of Christendom," the "Paynim," the representative of everything that was most contrary to Christianity; but

in more modest lines the position of England and France towards each other had been always most belligerent than friendly. Strange was the change which now beheld the two most Christian Powers, the most enlightened nations of the West, fighting in defence of Turkey and the representative of that very Soldan, noble brethren, as all the poets had painted him, whom the West had once assailed in his very fortress. The cause of the quarrel has been much doubted, and recent events have brought these suspicions back in changed yet cognate forms; for which reason, as for many others, it would be out of place here to offer any opinion. There is painfully much to be said on both sides. But the nation at least was unanimous as a nation when the strife commenced, profoundly excited and full of enthusiasm—an enthusiasm which the great sufferings of our troops in the first miserable winter, and the failure of many of the arrangements which ought to have secured their comfort, made only the greater. Having once entered upon such an enterprise, the British determination not to be beaten was capable of all and every sacrifice. The Queen took her part, as she always did, in the great national agitation. She sent off her Guards personally, if we may say so, waving her farewell to them on the morning of their march, with all the emotion which characterises a personal parting; and when her soldiers came back distributed with her own hands, as she has done ever since after any military achievement, the medals given for distinguished valour. She had in the mean time given her name to a new distinction, the most glorious of the times—the Victoria Cross; a reward now more highly prized than any other honour. It was instituted for the reward only of that highest valour which exposes or sacrifices itself for the saving of others. No nobler decoration (and also—it must be said—one less beautiful) ever rested on heroic bosoms; and it could come no more from no hands than those of a woman and a Queen.

Even the very close of this war had its splendours—splendours almost greater than any that had preceded them. The last distinguished Royal visitors whom the Queen received had been the Emperor of Russia and Louis Philippe, King of the French. Had it been done on purpose, by ordinance of heaven, to exhibit to some wondering choir of student angels the curious changes and instability of human things, no more perfect contradiction of the past could have been selected; for the next Royal person for whom bells rang, and guns were fired, and banners waved in England, was Louis Napoleon, Emperor of the French, our ally against Russia, nearest neighbour, and royal brother of our Sovereign, in the limited consanguinity of monarchs. Old Louis Philippe was dead in exile, and Nicholas steadily dying in St. Petersburg of failure and defeat and a broken heart, when the man who had displaced the one, and helped to crush the other, and who was, in his own person, but a poor representative of the great soldier of fortune whose name he bore, came to receive all the honours that had been lately

ALBERT, PRINCE CONSORT
Born 1819. Died 1861
From a Painting by Francis Hall

paid to them in Windsor. Such a strange revolution of fortune has very seldom happened in the world. And the interest is still more enhanced when we remember what fate overtook this wonderful man in his turn—a fate compounded of the griefs of both—his pestilences, defeat, shame, sorrow, and exile. Nothing could have been more splendid than his reception in England, where there had been many a severe comment on his group at Ham, and many a harsh criticism of the man; but where France's supreme right to decide in her own case had been long acknowledged.

The war lasted for one terrible winter, during which the heart of England was sore for the privations which her soldiers had to undergo—and a portion of another; but very early in the year 1856 it was finally over. The rejoicings for the peace were very enthusiastic; and there can be no doubt that the country was very thankful to be done with war, having already begun to doubt the excellence of the cause, and feeling itself much opposed to the French, and generally uneasy under the circumstances. However, nothing but good humour has ever been publicly apparent in respect to the Crimea. Some of the results of the war were of a good kind. We recovered that respect for our soldiers which is always worth preserving, and since that period many schemes for their elevation and improvement have been carried out. The Queen gives a graphic account of the manner in which the happy news of the peace was received at Balmoral, where she then was.

Another great and terrible war, if it could be called, followed very speedily upon that of the Crimea. It was, perhaps, the most horrible in which the British nation was ever engaged. Atrocities which we had learned to regard as mere chimeras of the past, and which civilisation and the course of time seemed to have made impossible, took place before our eyes upon our own flesh and blood, and the savage insults as well as cruelty which were showered upon British families in India roused the English nation at home to one of those passionate outbursts of feeling which make a nation feel like an individual, and sweep away all the moderating influence of diversities of opinion. The story of the Indian Mutiny is too dreadful to be told even now with anything like calm, and at the moment the national mind was roused almost to frenzy. It was full of the most heartrending and agonising episodes, dangers as terrible and deliverances as unlooked-for as ever happened in the earlier ages. It ended—as we have all been long in the certainty that every war undertaken by Englishmen must end—in complete victory. The political result of this great national trial was that the old government of the East India Company—the most curious and anomalous power which, perhaps, ever existed—was finally abolished, and that the Imperial Government was established in name as well as in fact there as in all other parts of the national domain. The whole civil and military service of India has been

THE LATE PRINCE CONSORT'S ROOM AT BALMORAL CASTLE

THE QUEEN'S VISIT TO SANDRINGHAM, APRIL 25, 1889—THE HUNTERS' SALUTE

transformed by this change, and many important differences made. Of course, so far as the Queen was concerned, the change—even that recent one which has altered her honoured title, in regard to the Eastern portion of her possessions, and made her Empress—was no real change at all; for Her Majesty never had more faithful servants nor England more devoted ones than in the soldiers and civilians of the Company's Service. But the change of Governments has produced many other results of an important kind, all of which may be considered as owing to the Mutiny, which was, beyond all comparison, the most tragical accident which has happened to England for many generations.

In a year made memorable for ever in the Queen's history as that in which her life was, so to speak, broken and rent in twain by the death of her much-beloved husband, the great American Civil War, with all its painful consequences to ourselves, occurred. There seemed a moment when England was likely to be made a party in the quarrel by what is called the *Trent* affair. An English mail steamer, the *Trent*, from Havannah, was boarded by an American man-of-war, and two passengers in it, Commissioners from the Southern States, were forcibly taken from under the protection of our flag. As soon as this was known the country blazed into sudden excitement, a Cabinet Council was held at once, and a "Memorandum" was instantly prepared, instructing the English Ambassador in America to demand a disavowal of the act on the part of the American Government, and a restoration of the prisoners. This Memorandum was submitted, as all such despatches must be, to the Queen. Prince Albert at the time was already battling with his last illness, but his clear and calm intellect perceived how important it was that a representation involving so many hazards to two great countries so closely allied by nature should be prepared with the greatest care. The Royal pair, both by this time so experienced in all Imperial business, held their own private council over this important State paper, and the result was a note conveying the suggestion to her Ministers that the despatch should be softened in tone, that the English Government should express their unwillingness to believe that the American Government could have intended any such insult to the British flag, and their hope that reparation would be spontaneously offered—a suggestion which instantly commended itself to the statesmen concerned and, being adopted, was probably the cause of the peaceful solution of the difficulty. *A facsimile* of this note is given in the last volume of the "Life of the Prince Consort," just published. It is in his handwriting, as it was his composition; but here and there are interlineations in the Queen's hand, perhaps only to correct the occasional slip in English into which the Prince still fell by times, perhaps to amend a phrase; but here they remain in touching evidence of that perfect union which was so soon to close—a union of mind and thought and high deliberation, as well as of the closest affection. The reader, we are confident, will understand why we make this little touching circumstance so prominent, for this is not a record of national business, but of the Queen's public life, and there is no incident in it which gives a more clear view of the manner in which Her Majesty's part of the Imperial work is done. To soothe, to modify, and, without compromising any right, to

HER MAJESTY'S VISIT TO LORD BEACONSFIELD AT HUGHENDEN, DECEMBER, 1877—AT THE RAILWAY STATION, HIGH WYCOMBE

leave a place for unforced concurrence, is a most Royal mode of sailing in the work of the State. Her Majesty is anxious to tell the whole world that this wisdom was not hers, but his whom she mourns. But her writing, mingled with that of the Prince, reveals to us the intimate consultation, the serious thought together, the double action of the two who were one, which is very interesting and pathetic.

Till Queen Victoria, too, joins the great company who have gone before us, the world will not see another despatch noted in her hand, or know what is the advice given by her experience in the Council of which she is the one only permanent member, the most experienced of all.

We should never have known anything about it probably had not the Prince died, and her faithful love determined upon such a memorial of him as only the records of his blameless life could supply. And as here her own revelation of her laborious life breaks off, we will not attempt to fill it up with gossip or conjecture. The last years have brought many emergencies with them, and though during their course the Queen has retired from the bustle and pleasure of life, it is the universal testimony that even at the darkest she never withdrew herself from her Royal work, but performed faithfully like any laboring man or woman in her dominions day by day.

HER MAJESTY REVIEWING THE VOLUNTEERS AT WINDSOR, JULY 9TH, 1881—BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE GROUND

CHAPTER VI.

JOY AND SORROW

We may now resume the more undivided strain of biography. For while all these events had been going on there had grown up in Royal Windsor, around the young pair whom we accompanied there for their honeymoon, the group of Princes and Princesses with whom we are now all so familiar. When the country was just emerging from the anguish of the Indian Mutiny, and beginning to be capable once more of happier thoughts, the first outrange in the Queen's family brought a gleam of brightness into the sombre history of the time. The Princess Royal, the eldest daughter and favourite of the nation, Victoria—like her mother, and very like her mother in other ways, with the singular tenacity of the Royal family to the same type of features and colour—married Prince Frederick William of Prussia, whose, and whose splendid but tragic story we all have learned so well since then—the future Prince Imperial of Germany and Emperor of that as yet undeveloped and scarcely hyped-for Empire—to the perfect satisfaction of her parents. The Queen had been too happy in her own married life not to prize happy marriages for her children beyond all other forms of good fortune. The betrothal of the young Princess (only seventeen) took place at Balmoral, and the Queen herself tells us of the partly circumstances that attended the Royal love-tale, so like all other love-tales in all classic, small and great:—

"Our dear Victoria was this day (September 29th, 1857) engaged to Prince Frederick William of Prussia, who had been on a visit to us since the 14th. He had already spoken to us on the 19th of his wishes; but we were uncertain, on account of her extreme youth, whether he should speak to her himself or wait till he came back again. However, we felt it was better he should do so; and during our ride up Craig-an-bas this afternoon, he picked a piece of white heather (the emblem of good luck) which he gave to her; and this emboldened him to make an allusion to his hopes and wishes, which led to this happy conclusion."

The marriage took place in the very beginning of 1858, in the beautiful Chapel of St. George at Windsor, the Chapel of the Garter, and, next to Westminster, the most Royal and stately of all English sacred places. It has seen many other marriages and splendid ceremonials in Queen Victoria's family circle, but never any so entirely happy, with a splendour fully justified by unbroken prosperity and family joy, as this. Father and mother and children, and the mother's mother—who was receiving her reward for all the self-denials of her early life in the unbroken domestic happiness of the expanded circle—drew aloud round the first bride of the family, and recalled the first Victoria and her marriage-day to all England, with

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a happy sentiment which endeared both the mother and the child. It was such a family as might still flourish unbroken for long years, for the Royal parents were still young, in the full bloom and vigour of life, and there had as yet appeared among them no warning cloud, not shadow to bring dismay.

When the Princess went away some time later, in a wintry day through the falling snow, pale with the first sorrow of parting, that happy grief was the worst family trouble which the happy home had ever known; and all England felt it, too, with that tender sympathy which exists amongst those who had accompanied each other through all the details of family life, and who knew the ages of the Royal children by heart, calculating them by those of their own boys and girls, their contemporaries. Even now, when those children have got to middle age, and have ceased to retain the more touching interest of youth, this strong family feeling returns to the general heart, whenever there is any special joy, and still more when there is any special trouble, in the household of the Queen.

With this marriage a new era in the family life began. It is good when the boys and girls grow up, and spread their own life over the world, carrying love and home thoughts with them wherever they go: but there are pangs in it which fathers and mothers will always realise. A few years after the pretty young Princess went forth to her new country, the Prince of Wales began his work as an apprentice to that hard trade of Royalty and representation at once of his parents and his country. "The time had now come to arrange for the fulfilment of a promise which had been made by the Queen to the Canadians that the Prince of Wales should pay a visit to their country. The promise had been given during the Crimean War (for which Canada had levied and equipped a regiment of infantry) in answer to a request that Her Majesty would visit the American possessions. The Canadian deputation by whom this request was conveyed were accounts of their good looks and manners and youthful discretion reached their parents. The Queen's thanks to the President of the United States for these most delightful of all applauses, the praises he bestowed on her son, are evidently spoken with a swelling heart, and it is easy to understand with what interest all the newspapers, full of the details of the young Princes' expeditions, were pored over and sacredly laid up—every scrap of them. "Fine of you almost," writes Prince Albert on a birthday, "Bertie, Alley, Baby, and you—but all well employed, and doing well, and for a father's heart that is a chief concern." He is very clever, and infinitely busy and active," he says of Prince Alfred in another place.

Here is a pretty little glimpse of the early domestic life of the Princess Royal, as England still delighted to call her, a title into which the tongue is sometimes beguiled even in speaking of a lady so full of experience of life, and so surely tried by sorrow as the Empress Frederick. We derive it from one of those fatherly, tender letters which break so pleasantly the serious strain of the last volume of the "Prince Consort's Life." While the sons were still away the Royal Family had planned a trip to Coburg, to visit the old home which the Prince Consort loved, and to see their eldest child, whom they loved still more:—

"You must, however, bring the hopeful William with you, and not hide him away with a blush, as you used to hide your drawings in the portfolio. 'Dear's book or that, papa!' It is so sad you must not see it,' and then forth came into view something full of beauty and talent."

The next of the family to come forward with modest grace into the foreground is Princess Alice, a name now made sacred by death. "A graceful young woman," is her father's description of her in this early moment of youth, when she, too, was unfolding. The sons were still absent when the second daughter began to answer also to the first call of active life. There had been a visitor at March the first cloud that had overshadowed the Queen's life appeared, drifting suddenly upwards and covering the sky with gloom. She had been so happy!—in all her letters, in everything she says, this blessedness pours forth. She hints at the anniversary of "our blessed marriage—a day which has brought us such inestimable blessings!" little thinking, alas, poor lady! that this anniversary was the last—" very few can say with me," she cries in an ecstasy of thankful pride and joy, "that their husband at the end of twenty-one years is not only full of the friendship, kindness, and affection which a truly happy marriage brings with it, but of the same tender love as in the very first days of our marriage."

In another month this happy wife and her husband were in dutiful and sad attendance at the mother's death bed. The Queen had never known what grief was before. She was taken in full tide of her prosperous life unprepared for sorrow. "Oh, what agony, what despair is this!" she cries, when some attendant, thinking to comfort her, prophesies for her mother "a gentle ending." "I was left alone gazing on that beloved form," she writes a little further on; "and feeling as if my heart would break." She says afterwards, with the simplicity of an emotion so deep, yet so natural, "The constant crying was a relief. But, oh! the sickness of heart—the thought of the daily, hourly blank!—never a day that I did not get letters from or about her several times in the day." "The mother I so tenderly loved, from whom for three forty-one years I had never been parted, except for a week," the Queen adds, and her journal is full of the most touching descriptions, such as we all could parallel, of the forsaken rooms—everything the same, except that the one presence, which gave all a meaning, is gone for ever. But all this real and deep sorrow was but as a prelude to that which was coming. The death of a parent is so natural—so inevitable. The Duchess was old, full of years and honours. She had got her reward for the many sacrifices and self-renunciations of

HER MAJESTY AT THE SALUTING POINT—REVIEWING THE TROOPS AFTER THE EGYPTIAN WAR IN ST. JAMES'S PARK NOVEMBER 18, 1882

officially told that it would be undesirable to expose the Sovereign to the risks of the voyage and the fatigues attending such a visit. The Canadians then asked that the Queen should give them one of her sons as Governor-General. Their youth made the impossible, but an announcement was given that as soon as the Prince of Wales was old enough to do so he should visit Canada. This promise was fulfilled in 1860, when he was nineteen. About the same time Prince Alfred, the sailor-boy of the family, joined his ship, and set out for the Cape. "I will be a strange and noteworthy circumstance," writes Prince Albert, "that almost in the same week in which the elder brother is to open the great bridge across the St. Lawrence in Canada, the youngest will lay the foundation stone of the breakwater for the harbour of Capetown at the other end of the world. What a charming picture is here of the progress and expansion of the British race, and of the useful co-operation of the Royal family to the civilisation which England has developed and advanced! In both these colonies our children are hooked for with great affection and conscious national pride." Thus the two lads were sent forth to begin their career, the mother quaking, who can doubt, at every breeze that blew while both the boys were on the sea, but taking courage on his Royal companion from all pick of necessity to keep them at home, and near to her—on the contrary, sending them to their future occupations all the more easily, and all the more inevitably, because they were Princes, and bound to be the first in the service of their country. The world knows how many journeys and wearisome pageants, what crowds of ceremonial performances, opening of bridges, laying of foundation stones, every kind of dubious office has been provided by British loyalty ready and heavily and cheerfully the Prince of Wales and his brothers have worked through them all. These first essays in their career were very successful. The Princes were received with universal love and sympathy, and the pleasantest Windsor whom the anxious parents had seen to be attached to, and to attract, the child who was then the chief ornament of their house. The young sister was all that parents could desire for their child, and by and by there occurred the following pretty scene:—

"After dinner, which we took in the guidemess (it is the Queen who speaks), I perceived Alice and Louis talking before the fireplace more earnestly than usual, and when I passed to go to the other room, both came up to me, and Alice in much agitation said that he had proposed to her, and begged for my blessing. I told Louis has a warm, noble heart. We embraced our dear Alice, and *pressed her* sweet to him.

"This is one of the natural simple touches of detail which make all the Queen's notes so graphic. Thus the children were all taking wing, fluttering outward with young pinions, ready for many a flight over land and sea. With still so many younger children at home the future and all of all these new lives beginning, notwithstanding the partings involved, surely the atmosphere all the more lively and bright—the parents being still young themselves, and the last of their flock not much more than a baby, and keeping them all amused with his baby wit and wisdom.

But outside which so long and long away was now near at hand. So long a stretch of happiness is given to few, as, indeed, happiness so complete is rarely given to any. "To-day our marriage-joines of age, accordingly to law," the Prince Consort writes. "We have faithfully kept our pledge for better and for worse, and have only to thank God that He has vouchsafed so much happiness to us. May He have us in His keeping for the days to come! You have, I trust, found good and loving children in us, and have experienced nothing but love and kindness from you."

This was written to the Duchess of Kent, the good and wise mother with whom their history began. Alas for those days to come! This was on the 10th of February, 1861. In the middle of her life. But to look at the head of that young and happy house, himself still so young, in the very fullness of his manhood; who could think that he was so soon to follow? The most indifferent, even an enemy—if there had been an enemy in the world to this gentle, beneficent, honest, pure household—could not have contemplated such a possibility without dismay.

The Queen came back to Windsor after her usual holidays in Scotland in the end of October of this fatal year 1861. "The first day the Queen's wounds were opened afresh, and she suffered greatly, as it is the first time she has lived there without finding Mamma at Frogmore," Prince Albert writes. But the new beginning was made with courage and patience, and time began to heal the wound. Everything in November and all series of events occurred in Portugal, in the young Royal family there, the sons of another Prince of Saxe-Coburg, who had also in his sphere fulfilled the part of a Prince Consort to the comfort and happiness of his wife's kingdom. Typhoid fever broke out among the Princes, and in a few weeks the young King (who had lost his young wife a year or two previously of the same disorder) and two of his brothers were dead. These sad events, it is evident, made a great impression upon Prince Albert. The letters of both the Queen and the Prince are full of them, and they seem to have given a kind of shock and chill to his very existence. He was "low and sad," ailing, and unable to get over the mournful impression; and Her Majesty took fights and anxiously begged those around him as much as possible to save him from the multitudinous exertions which were expected of him. The Prince's courage and heart seem, indeed, to have failed him all at once. He had suddenly grown weary in the midst of his days. Not that he intermitted a single exertion, as withdrew from any one of the claims upon him; but he was tired, though it was still but noonday, and life seemed to stretch far before him. "He had no wish to die," he

THE DUCHESS OF KENT'S MAUSOLEUM AT FROGMORE

THE PRINCE CONSORT'S MAUSOLEUM AT FROGMORE

biographer tells us; "but he did not care for living." Not long before his final illness, in speaking to the Queen, he said, "I do not cling to life; you do; but I set no store by it. If I knew that those I love were well cared for, I should be quite ready to die to-morrow." In the same conversation he added, "I am sure if I had a severe illness I should give up at once; I should not struggle for life."

Ominous and prophetic words! for the will to live is often half the battle. Prince Albert had gone into harness at twenty. He had never relaxed in his labours for all those twenty-one years. A crowned head has no holiday, and his was almost more than the labour which falls upon a crowned head. He had never rested nor thought of rest. Telegrams and despatches had followed him wherever he went, even when he was not absolutely at work. And now the inevitable reaction had come. He was weary in the middle of the way.

From this time forward he was never well. "Am very wretched," "Thoroughly unwell," "Have scarcely closed my eyes at night for the last fortnight." These were the records that were found afterwards in his diary. But, weary as he was, he kept on, with that sense of duty which never deserted him. At last it almost seems as if he moved half-mechanically, languor growing upon him in the laborious routine from which there was no escape, although that last flash of brilliant exertion, that last effort of fine good sense and feeling which we have already recorded—the Prince's memorandum on the *Trent* affair—took place on December 1st, only a fortnight before his death. He was ill then. "He could eat no breakfast, and looked very wretched" on the morning of the day on which he roused himself to do this piece of work for England. That morning the doctors were called in, and it became apparent that a serious illness was coming on.

The Queen has given a full account of this illness in the "Life"—all its vicissitudes; the moments when he was better; the sad attempts to be cheerful and amuse him—all those tremulous changes most of us know so well. "I was sadly nervous with the ups and downs of hope and fear," her Majesty says, feeling all her kingdoms contracted into that sick room, where she was no Queen, but a weeping, trembling supplicant, praying in vain, as so many of us have done, for the life most dear to her. Most touching are the details of this last illness. He asked for music, and a piano was brought into the adjoining room, on which the Princess Alice played to him the old religious music of his youth. Then, in the hushed room, the Queen sat and read aloud in a vain attempt to amuse him. Now and then his interest was attracted; but who can tell what thoughts accompanied these reasons—solemn thoughts of the listener, agonising incomprehension on the part of the reader of the very words which her own lips were uttering. Other women who have done the same by other death-beds will understand what it was. How many of us could call forth similar scenes from the dim caves of memory! "He was so pleased to see me, stroked my face and smiled, and called me *liebes Frauchen* (dear little wife)." Thus with alternations of wistful hope the days ran on. There was a picture hanging in his room, a copy of one of Raphael's Madonnas, which, he said, "helps me through the day"; but even then he could not quite get free his mind from the larger affairs which, till they dropped out of his hands, had been his chief business. "You have not forgotten the important communication to Normora?" he asked only two days before the end. But by-and-by nothing but an expression of love now and then would come from those pale lips—"Dear wife! good little wife!" that was all he said.

Many of those who read this will recollect the shock and pang of dismay and sorrow with which we all heard on that wintry Sunday morning that the Prince was dead. His danger even was but imperfectly known, when the sudden terrible news went forth—news which touched every house as with a personal blow. The present writer remembers well the wondering, pale crowds streaming out of the churches, where in many cases the news was heard for the first time, not able to believe it—scarcely able to speak of it. Not for his sake—he it said with regret that not till after he was gone for ever did we fully recognise what a man he was—but for hers. Wherever two people met that day throughout the three kingdoms other questions were forgotten, and all that any one could say was "The poor Queen! Oh, the poor Queen!" And we all know how she fell under the blow—dropped away as was so natural from all the pleasantness and brightness of life, covered her face, and shrank from the light.

It was on the 14th of December, 1861, that Prince Albert died. And it was only after his death that he received the appreciation which his singularly perfect character deserved. This appreciation he had got from all who came in contact with him in his lifetime; but by the mass of the people who were not near enough to fall under his personal influence, he was not sufficiently known to be beloved. Perhaps, if truth were told, he was too uniformly noble, too high above all soil and fault, to win the fickle popular admiration which is more caught by picturesque irregularity than by the higher perfections of a wholly worthy life. But after his death, and chiefly since the Queen's own generous and tender impulse prompted her to make the country the confidant of her great love and happiness, the Prince Consort had full justice. The record of their mutual life has interwoven the happiest and purest hours of existence with the national history.

After this melancholy epoch the Queen's life was for a long time entirely changed, and she suffered by moments from the unjust judgment of her people. The country complained of her for the first time; but the complaint itself was the highest proof of love and honour. The one reproach that has been raised against Her Majesty is that in her sorrow she fell out of the practice of that intercourse with her people in which the country delighted. England grudged her seclusion, her mourning, the true

THE FUNERAL OF THE DUKE OF ALBANY IN ST. GEORGE'S CHAPEL, WINDSOR, APRIL 5, 1884

and profound grief of her widowhood; although, at the same time, with very natural and thoroughly English perversity, the country was proud of the faithful sorrow which would not be comforted. More and more, however, as it was known what the Prince had been to the Queen, the overwhelming grief of her widowhood was better understood. It has been said again and again to her eternal honour, that she never failed in her attention to business through all these years of sorrow. But her courage failed her for the gaieties of life, the ceremonials of State, and that office of social leader and head, which no one else could fill, but which it is so hard to undertake with a sorrowful heart. Even these duties, however, Her Majesty by degrees, as she was able for the exertion, to some extent has resumed. And the marriage of the greater number of her children, and the springing up of a second generation about the Royal House has restored more or less, as years have passed, the atmosphere of cheerfulness and hope.

These marriages have all been, on the model of Her Majesty's own union, marriages of inclination, the setting up of many households, as full of affection and happiness as it is our national boast an English home in every rank and condition of life is, far beyond the average of any other nation, as in no other nation is the theory that love alone is the great condition of marriage so fully acknowledged. The first event in the life of the Royal Family, after the loss of its head, was the marriage of the Princess Alice, which was one of the last domestic arrangements sanctioned and settled by the Prince Consort before his death. That it was an event almost more full of sadness than of gladness was inevitable in the melancholy circumstances. It took place at Osborne in the very depth of mourning, without any of the state and splendour which has usually accompanied Royal marriages. It was in deference to the Princess's wishes that the ceremony was not delayed, but nothing could bring the smiles and joy back to the hearts or faces of the widow and fatherless. Princess Alice was in many respects at that period the most prominent of the children of the Queen. Her behaviour at the death of her father, the self-command and native force of character which made her, a slight girl of seventeen, the prop and support, it is scarcely too much to say, on which not only the distracted mother, but the whole framework of the Constitutional Sovereignty rested for the moment, had filled the whole country with a sorrowful enthusiasm. Through this dear daughter the Queen had almost a personal share in the suffering involved in the great public calamities which soon after rent the Continent and changed the face of Europe. The Schleswig-Holstein struggle, which placed Prince Louis of Hesse against his brother-in-law, the Crown Prince of Prussia, and his own brother, who was an officer in the Prussian army, was in every way painful and wrenched to the family thus placed in artificial opposition to each other, without even the support of a warmly held principle—and the after and graver misery of the Franco-German War, in which Prince Louis' place as Commandant of a Division in the German army, though justified by patriotism and all the excitement of a great national struggle, was full of yet more serious and awful anxiety. It is difficult for persons in the more tranquil and sheltered ranks of life to understand how much that is personal mingles with the anxiety of public events to those placed at the head of the country. We are apt to think, and especially the vast middle class of England is apt to think, that wars which cost themselves, as they believe, a great deal of money may be undertaken with a light heart at once by monarchs and statesmen who are called for no sacrifices. The middle class, "the ratepayers," the endless masses who are too well off to have sons privates in the army, and not sufficiently well off to make them officers, are, above all, disposed to take this view. An additional twopence on the income tax is the price they pay, and they are apt to resent it deeply, and to supplement the old reproach, "War is a game which were their subjects wise, kings would not play at," with the indignant conviction that kings and rulers have no penalty to pay for the great quarrels for which they are held responsible. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Queen had relations innumerable in those battles even which concerned us so little, except in the way of sympathy, during the dreadful year 1870. Her Majesty never could tell what a day, what a telegram might bring of sudden calamity—for bullets are little regardful of princes, and the Queen of England's daughter was as likely as any poor soldier's wife in all that vast host to have her home made desolate, and her life shattered any day.

We have, however, omitted to note other family events which preceded this. The marriage of the Prince of Wales, in 1863, to the beautiful and popular princess of whom the country ever since has been so proud, recognising the unalienable charm of beauty and grace with a universal sentiment almost stronger than any other in the general mind, transcending even personal worth and greatness. The marriage of the Princess Helena, in 1865, and Louise, in 1871, soon followed; the latter on the occasion of the stormy period of the Continental wars, and distinguished by the first breach of the long-standing Royal custom of marrying the daughters of the reigning house only to Princes; although the bridegroom in this case, though a subject, had as genuine a title to be called Prince, had such been the fashion in these islands, as many a secondary Continental Sovereign, and much more than many of the scions of German houses who are distinguished by that title. The Duke of Edinburgh made the most splendid of matches by bringing home, in 1874, the daughter of the Czar, the Grand Duchess Marie, as his bride. The marriage of the three younger children of the Royal house followed in succession. Prince Arthur, the Duke of Connaught, marrying the daughter of the famous "Red Prince," Prince Frederick Charles of Prussia; Prince Leopold, the daughter of the Prince of Waldeck-Pyrmont; and Princess Beatrice, Prince Henry of Battenberg. The growth of a new generation of grandchildren around the throne, sprightly young people, boys and girls, full of adventure, full of hope and happiness, in due course of time occasionally falling in love with each other, forming alliances in the third generation, and surrounding the Queen wherever she moved with an atmosphere of youth and brightness is well known to us all. Nor has there been any aspect of Her Majesty's character more respected and delightful than this latter phrase in which the tender weakness of a woman, most happy in her own love, for the love stories and little romances of her descendants, encouraged and supported a little rebellion now and then, in the interests of true affection, and the most human and womanly delight of a mother, never outgrowing that phase of nature, in all the habits and their ways, has surrounded the Queen with a loving and harmonious light.

This latter portion of Her Majesty's life has not been, however, without great anxieties and sorrows. In 1871, when peace had begun to settle again over the distracted Continent, and the happier part of the German conquest, that which concerned their internal reorganisation and establishment in one great Empire had brought Her Majesty the pleasure of a hope fulfilled—the hope of one dearer than herself, her never-forgotten husband—as well as that of a great and splendid enlargement as was hoped of the future plan and position to be filled by her daughter, then suddenly rose a great and threatening cloud which involved the whole unbroken family in gloom. The Prince of Wales fell ill in the autumn of this year with fever, the same as that which had carried off his father ten years before. The disease ran its full and longest course, and the life of the heir of their kingdom sank to what seemed the last weakness. Never before, perhaps, was there such a period of universal emotion and terrible suspense. It is no hyperbole to say that the entire population hung upon the news from that sick-room, as if it had been each man and each woman's absent son who lay there battling for his life. Even in the most modest circles where Court favour or convention of any kind was unknown, every social enjoyment was suspended, and people had no heart to meet, to sit at each other's boards, to think of any pleasure while that life hung in the balance. Never was there a more wonderful and impressive sight. The universal enthusiasm and delight when the Prince, restored to life and health, went in State to St. Paul's to render thanks for his recovery by the side of his happy mother was commonplace in comparison with the extraordinary passion which took place in the life of the nation during his illness. It was a thing which no one could have anticipated, and which could have been produced by nothing but the spontaneous feeling which made millions of people recognise themselves as all of one family and kin. The greatest anxiety and trial thus happily overcome, is, perhaps, not to be ranked as an evil in life, overwhelming as it is while it lasts, for the greatness of the trial does but increase the joy. But the Queen was soon to encounter other anxieties which had not the same fortunate end. In 1874 the family at Hesse, so specially dear to Her Majesty, the children of that daughter Alice, who had been her mother's comforter and companion in the greatest of her sorrows, was seized with an alarming attack of diphtheria, which assailed one member after another—father and six children—all except the much-tried mother who was left to nurse them, though herself still in feeble health consequent upon the tragic death of one of her children from a fall from the open window, which had occurred in her own room and under her eyes. A period of great anxiety followed, lasting a month, during which telegrams perpetually reached the Queen of every variation in the state of the patient, so that Windsor Castle became but a sort of vestibule to the Palace at Darmstadt where all that suffering was. One of the children died in a week; the others suffered greatly, but began to recover, when at the last, having seen them all out of danger, the Princess caught the fatal malady. There were various accounts—all equally pathetic and touching—given of the manner in which she caught it. It was said, for one thing, that, unable to restrain her anguish after weeks of suffering, the poor mother had kissed one of the children, whom little feverish face had been turned to her appealingly in the struggles of the dreadful complaint. Another—and it is supposed the true one—that, worn out by all that she had gone through during those weeks of agony, she laid her head in her weariness on her husband's pillow, perhaps in a moment of desperation, when all she loved seemed to be parting from her. Her strength had been utterly exhausted, and she had no power to resist the terrible complaint. The husband and the children got better, but the young mother, in the height of life, at the time when existence was most sweet, was taken from those she had nursed so tenderly. The grief to the Queen was overwhelming. It was the first breach in that united and tenderly-affectionate family which had hitherto surrounded Her Majesty as with a bodyguard of intimate understanding and love.

Six years after, the youngest son—the invalid of the house from his birth, he who had called forth the most anxiety and continual care among that family, for the most part so robust and active, and who had, in consequence, rarely left his mother's side—Prince Leopold, also died in the most sudden and startling manner, adding the effect of a great and painful shock to the natural grief. He had recovered his health as he matured into full manhood, had married, and become the father of children; so that the fears that had been

HER MAJESTY'S JUBILEE, JUNE 21, 1887—THE QUEEN EMBRACING THE PRINCESS OF WALES IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

THE OPENING OF THE IMPERIAL INSTITUTE BY THE QUEEN ON MAY 10, 1893

THE MARRIAGE OF THE DUKE OF YORK TO PRINCESS VICTORIA MARY OF TECK IN ST. JAMES'S CHAPEL ON JULY 6, 1893

entertained of him were all happily laid at rest, when suddenly, like a thunderbolt, this blow fell.

Thus with the usual mingled round of joy and trouble, of anxiety and deliverance, the often long intervals of calm, the Queen has pursued her quiet round of duty never neglected, and Royal functions performed with almost too little ostentation, so that the ignorant scarcely knew, and the best-informed often forgot, how onerous and exhausting these were, until she reached the climax of her Jubilee, after fifty years of faithful service to her country and the world. This great event, it was instantly perceived by all, must be celebrated in a manner worthy of its rarity in history, and of the great veneration and affection borne, not only by her own dominions in that famous circle upon which the sun never sets, but by the whole civilised world, towards the most honoured Sovereign in Christendom. Her Majesty went in State to Westminster to make her thanksgiving through two endless living walls of her subjects, crowding every window, every housetop, every pavement on her way, giving forth one prolonged shout of applause and blessing, and meeting her eyes wherever they turned with the smiles and tears of multitudes, rich and poor, faces all beaming welcome, and full of tender reverence and admiration. She was surrounded and escorted—by a brilliant and romantic inspiration too full of poetry to have come, one would think, from any official brain—by a bodyguard of Princes, her sons and sons-in-law, the future King of England and the future Emperor of Germany among the band, a gallant group who inspired the imagination above any other detail of the procession, though that included a number of Sovereigns, Western Kings, and Eastern Princes, the latter blazing in diamonds and splendid colour, amid the more sombre costumes of Christendom. The glorious Abbey, decorated more splendidly than by either flags or flowers, with row upon row and tier upon tier of faces, in every gallery and corner, full of enthusiasm and emotion, made a fit end and climax to all this splendour, and many a heart beat with a pang of sympathy as the centre of all this rejoicing, the Queen, a woman well stricken in years, full of experience, surrounded by her children and her subjects, yet in the great isolation of her rank, alone, knelt before the altar at which she had been consecrated—feeling, who can doubt, at that moment, as at all others, but doubly in the greatness of the event, the absence of him who alone could have taken from her a portion of the burden of that triumph, as of all the troubles that went before it.

The Queen was surrounded on this occasion by her joyful and united family, sons and daughters, sons-in-law and daughters-in-law, and the already numerous descendants of her House in the second generation, in full prosperity and happiness, so many household full of love and strength, adding hope and the highest prospects for the future to this climax of the mother's individual life. Perhaps the most remarked of the band of Princes who surrounded the carriage of the Queen on the day of Jubilee was the gallant and manly figure of the Crown Prince of Germany, the husband of her eldest daughter, the Princess Royal of Great Britain. But this noble Prince was already overshadowed by the disease which was to place the seal of mortal vanity upon so many prospects and hopes. There was no pair more apt to bear the weight of empire, more qualified to carry out the highest schemes, than Frederick of Prussia and Victoria, his English wife, both in full maturity of years and mind and moral and intellectual force, who had naturally looked for years to this great inheritance. The whole world knows the mournful tale, one of the most tragic chapters of contemporary history. Thus the heaviest trouble came again upon the Queen's life and family. She herself, with that courage and indifference to personal exertion which always distinguished her, made a hasty and fatiguing journey to Berlin in the spring in order to see, to cheer, and stimulate in their struggle, the husband who was dying heroically

THE FUNERAL OF PRINCE HENRY OF BATTENBERG: THE SERVICE IN WHIPPINGHAM CHURCH ON FEBRUARY 2, 1896
DRAWN BY H. M. PAGET

by inches at his post, and the wife who, in the exercise of heroism almost greater, had to stand by and see him die. Neither Her Majesty's age nor her health were such as to strengthen her for such efforts. But she carried out her purpose with her usual calm valour, and, as a matter of fact, overawed all opposition, and was received with the utmost respect during her short and anxious visit, which gave her the mournful satisfaction at least of bidding farewell to one who has been to her a son.

In November, 1894, the serious illness of Prince George of Wales from typhoid fever once more cast a gloom over the Court, but, happily only for a moment, and the year closed joyfully with the convalescence of the young Prince, and with the preparations for the marriage of the Duke of Clarence and Avondale to the Princess Victoria Mary of Teck. This match was an extremely popular one, and all classes were looking forward to the celebration with the keenest interest, when the news came from Sandringham that the Duke was suffering from influenza and inflammation of the lungs. For a few days there was still hope, and then, on Thursday, January 14th, came the fatal news that the Duke had passed away.

The whole of the year 1892 was passed very quietly and sadly by the Court, for the Queen and the Prince and Princess of Wales were much broken by the loss of the Duke of Clarence and Avondale, but in 1893 Her Majesty was seen a good deal in public. In March she spent a month at the Villa Palmieri at Florence, and later on held several Drawing Rooms. One of the most important public events of the year was the opening of the Imperial Institute on May 11. Her Majesty had laid the foundation-stone on July 4, 1887, with much state, but the inaugural ceremony was one of the most brilliant spectacles of the present reign. The streets were thronged from Buckingham Palace to South Kensington at an early hour, and the whole of the route was lined with troops. At noon the Prince of Wales's procession arrived, and His Royal Highness was accompanied by the Duke of York, the Duchess of Teck, and the Princess May. Then came the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh and the Duke and Duchess of Connaught and their children. The Queen's procession reached the Institute at half-past twelve. Her Majesty was accompanied by Princess Christian and Princess Henry of Battenberg, and Prince Christian and Prince Henry followed in another carriage. The escort was most remarkable, as it consisted of a guard of honour which included picked men from the Canadian and Australian Volunteers and detachments from the Indian Army. The inaugural ceremony took place in a temporary building on the site of the Great Hall of the Imperial Institute, and about 2,500 spectators were present, including several Indian Princes, many of the Ministry, Opposition, Ambassadors, judges, and members of both Houses of Parliament. The Prince of Wales, as President of the Governing Body, read an address, stating that the Institute had been erected by contributions from all parts of the Empire, and hoping that it would be a centre for stimulating enterprise and research. Her Majesty read a reply, recognising the building as a symbol of the Empire, and then declared the Institute open. The Prince of Wales repeated the declaration, and then, placing a key in a model of the building which was on a table just in front of the Queen, completed an electric current by which the Alexandra peal of bells in the Queen's Tower were set ringing. The Queen then quitted the Hall and returned to Buckingham Palace. The second great event of 1893 was the marriage of the Duke of York to Princess May of Teck, which took place on July 6 in the Chapel Royal of St. James's Palace. The Queen's procession left Buckingham Palace for the Chapel accompanied by the Duchess of Teck and Princess Francis and Alexander of Teck and the Grand Duke of Hesse-Darmstadt. A field officer's escort of Life Guards and a detachment of native Indian troops were in attendance. The Queen entered in the centre of the Royal procession, walking alone, only using her stick

THE ARRIVAL OF THE CZAR AND CZARITSA AT BALMORAL CASTLE ON SEPTEMBER 22, 1896

LIFE'S RUE AND ITS WINE

**'For one shall Grasp and one Resign,
One drink Life's Rue and one its Wine;
And God shall make the Balance Good.'**

'PEACE HATH HIGHER TESTS OF MANHOOD THAN BATTLE EVER KNEW.'

—*Whittier.*

'Behold, we know not anything; I can but trust that good shall fall At last—far off—at last, to all.'

—*Tennyson.*

OBEDIENCE IS OUR UNIVERSAL DUTY AND DESTINY!

PLATO MEDITATING ON IMMORTALITY BEFORE SOCRATES, THE BUTTERFLY, SKULL, AND POPPY, ABOUT 400 B.C.

'THE FREE MAN IS HE WHO IS LOYAL
TO THE LAWS OF THIS UNIVERSE;
WHO IN HIS HEART SEES AND KNOWS,
ACROSS ALL CONTRADICTIONS, THAT
INJUSTICE CANNOT BEFALL HIM HERE;
THAT EXCEPT BY SLOTH
AND COWARDLY FALSITY
EVIL IS NOT POSSIBLE HERE . . . .
OBEDIENCE IS OUR UNIVERSAL
DUTY AND DESTINY; wherein
WHOSO WILL NOT BEND MUST BREAK.'

—T. CARLYLE.

Or, in other words,—

OBEDIENCE TO NATURAL LAWS
is Health, Happiness, and Long Life,
while Disobedience or Ignorance
entails Disease, and hands it down
from One Generation to Another!!!

THE MORAL: It is impossible to have a South Front all round your House, but NOT impossible To take Joy Home

*'And make a place in Thy Great Heart for Her
And give Her Time to grow; and Cherish Her,
Then will She come and oft will sing to thee,
When Thou art working in FURROWS.'*

—WHITTIER.

'Former generations perished in venial ignorance of all sanitary laws. When Black Death massacred hundreds of thousands, neither the victims nor their rulers could be accounted responsible for their slaughter.'—*The Times.*

PREVENTION.

HUGE BLUNDER.—This age, in many points great and intelligent, spends large sums of money in legal strangling of those who cause their fellows violent death, the result of ignorance and a want of control over the passions, while we ***calmly*** allow millions to die of, and hundreds of millions to suffer from, various preventible diseases, simply for want of a proper sanitary tribunal. The most ordinary observer must be struck with the huge blunder.

AMONGST THE GREEKS GREAT SANITARY REFORMERS RECEIVED DIVINE HONOURS.

THE TRANSVAAL!!!

PROSPECTING FOR GOLD IN FEVER-STRICKEN PARTS OF AFRICA. LACK OF SANITATION IN JOHANNESBURG.

Lydenburg Camp, near Johannesburg, Transvaal.

'I feel as in duty bound to write and compliment you upon the WONDERFUL EFFECTS of ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT' in CLEARING the BODY of all FOUL SECRETIONS. I may add that for the last twelve years I have never been without it. I spent four years in New Orleans and the West Indies, and although people DIE there DAILY of FEVER, YET I ESCAPED, and I feel sure that it was owing to my KEEPING MY BLOOD COOL and my stomach in order by the USE OF ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT.' I came to this country eight years ago, and have lived in my capacity of GOLD PROSPECTOR in some of the MOST FEVER-STRICKEN parts of AFRICA. Just after the Jameson Raid I and five companions volunteered for service in Matabeleland. I, of course, took a good supply of ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT' with me. I may say, that of my five friends, with the exception of one who was killed, the REST were ALL DOWN with FEVER whilst in the Fly Country. Never in my life have I felt better, although FEVER is VERY PREVALENT in JOHANNESBURG owing to LACK of SANITATION or any system of drainage. You are at liberty to make whatever use you wish of this letter or of my name.—Yours faithfully, 'TRUTH,' Nov. 16, 1896.'

ZANZIBAR. THE UPPER DISTRICTS OF THE CONGO.—BLOOD POISONS.—A Gentleman writes: 'ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT' is without doubt the first in its class in febrifuge preparations. During my journeyings from Zanzibar to the Upper Districts of the Congo, as well as a long residence in the Tropics, I have never felt safe without it. I am at present in England on three months' leave.—Yours truly, VERITAS, February, 1895.'

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THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT where it has been taken in the earliest stages of a disease it has in innumerable instances **PREVENTED** what would otherwise have been a **SERIOUS ILLNESS.** The effect of **ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT'** upon a **DISORDERED** and **FEVERISH** condition of the system is **SIMPLY MARVELLOUS.** It is in fact **NATURE'S OWN REMEDY,** and an **UNSURPASSED ONE.**

CAUTION.—Examine each Bottle, and see that the Capsule is marked ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT.' Without it you have been imposed on by a WORTHLESS Imitation.

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for support, and dressed in black watered silk, richly draped with Honiton lace, with the blue ribbon of the Garter and a necklace and coronet of diamonds. Her Majesty took her seat by the altar steps, and the Grand Duke of Hesse stood by the Queen's seat during the ceremony. The Archbishop of Canterbury performed the service, after which the Duke and Duchess of York advanced and kissed Her Majesty. When the Royal Party left the Chapel the Queen leaned on the arm of the Grand Duke of Hesse. Another important function at which Her Majesty was present during the year was the unveiling of the Princess Louise's statue of the Queen as she was at the commencement of her reign, which is erected in Kensington Gardens in front of the Palace.

In 1894 Her Majesty went abroad, and, as before, stayed at Florence for some weeks, when the King and Queen of Italy paid her a visit. The Queen then went on to Coburg, where she was present at the wedding of her grandson, the Grand Duke of Hesse, to her granddaughter, the Princess Victoria Melita of Coburg, on April 19. After her return to England Her Majesty went to Manchester to open the Ship Canal on May 21, and, after making a short trip from Irlam to Manchester, declared the waterway open, and knighted the Lord Mayor of Manchester, the Mayor of Salford, the engineer of the Canal, and some other notabilities. In the year 1895 Her Majesty again went abroad in the spring, but to Nice instead of to Florence, and on her way home paid a visit to Darmstadt, where she was visited by the German Emperor and the Empress Frederick. Among the Queen's visitors were Nasrullah Khan, the son of the Ameer of Afghanistan, and the German Emperor, and one of the chief home events of the year was a grand review at Aldershot in July, when the Duke of Connaught led twelve thousand troops of all arms past the Queen. Two events also marked the Queen's summer visit to Balmoral; they were the opening of New Crathie Church on June 18, a ceremony which was the first of its kind since the Reformation, and the burning of Mar Lodge, the Duke of Fife's house.

Early in 1896 the Queen suffered a severe loss by the death of Prince Henry of Battenberg from fever contracted on the West Coast of Africa with the Ashanti Expedition. The body of the Prince was brought home to England on board H.M.S. *Blenheim*, and the funeral took place at Whippingham, where, in 1885, he had married the Princess Beatrice. Her Majesty, who was much overcome by the loss of her son-in-law, to whom she had become greatly attached, was present at the funeral service, and in her Speech at the opening of Parliament referred to the Prince as her "beloved son-in-law who voluntarily placed his valuable services at the disposal of myself and his adopted country." Early in March the Queen left England for Cimies with Princess Christian and Princess Victoria, and after seven weeks' stay in the Riviera the Queen returned to England and went at once to Windsor. A notable visitor in the summer was the Chinese Envoy Li Hung Chang, who was received in audience by the Queen at Osborne. In June Her Majesty entered upon the sixtieth year of her reign. The day was specially marked at London and Windsor, where the bells were rung, Royal salutes fired, and the public buildings decorated with flags. The Queen's statue, by Mr. Hamo Thornycroft, which was to replace one set up at the commencement of Her Majesty's reign, was also unveiled at the Royal Exchange. On September 23 the Queen had reigned longer than any English Sovereign, her grandfather, George III., having reigned fifty-nine years three months and four days, a limit which Her Majesty surpassed on that day.

PROGRESS

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1897.

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By the Queen's own desire no special recognition or celebration of the event was attempted, as the autumn is the dull season of the year, and it was felt that it would be more convenient in every way if the completion of the sixtieth year of reign were made the occasion of a great celebration in June of the present year. By a happy coincidence, the Czar and Czarina of Russia arrived at Balmoral on a visit to the Queen on September 23, and prolonged their stay until October 3. The Czar and Czarina arrived at Leith, where they were received by the Prince of Wales, and from Ballater drove in carriages to Balmoral, where Her Majesty received them surrounded by her retainers bearing torches. The visit was a purely domestic one. Lord Salisbury joined the party, but otherwise the visit was strictly private. Other notable events in the Queen's life were the christening of the baby Prince of York and the marriages of two granddaughters, the Princess Maud of Wales to her cousin, Prince Charles of Denmark, and the marriage of Princess Alexandra of Coburg to the Hereditary Prince of Hohenlohe-Langenburg. The little Prince of York was christened at Sandringham on February 17, and the ceremony was made the occasion of a great family gathering. The little Prince had eight Princes and Princesses as sponsors, and the Prince of Wales heralded the baby to the Bishop of Norwich, who christened him Albert Frederick Arthur George.

With the opening of the year 1897 preparations for celebrating in a fit and proper manner the Queen's long and glorious reign began all over the Empire. The Queen could not, of course, give any commands on the subject of the celebration, but in January the Prince of Wales published a letter, in which he said that, although the Queen would not express any opinion as to the various schemes for popular memorials of her reign, yet he might himself suggest that

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the Queen would certainly favour works of mercy among the sick and suffering and anything tending to lighten and ameliorate the lives of her poorer subjects. Acting upon this idea, the Prince of Wales issued an appeal on behalf of the Hospitals of London, pointing out that these institutions are terribly in debt, and asking for a sum which, capitalised, would put the hospitals beyond the reach of want.

It was for a long while in doubt whether the Queen would attend a public Thanksgiving Service on the completion of the sixtieth year of her reign, but finally it was announced that she would go in State to St. Paul's Cathedral on June 22, and that an open-air service would be held outside the western entrance, in order to spare Her Majesty the fatigue of leaving her carriage. The foregoing pages will give some faint idea of the leading features of her reign. Her Majesty has now lived longer than any English Sovereign, and among European potentates only the reign of Louis XIV. of France can be compared to hers. But whereas the reign of "Roi Soleil" ended in clouds and gloom, that of Queen Victoria is more brilliant than it ever was.

OUR SUPPLEMENTS

One of our supplements consists of five engravings of pictures by well-known artists of some of the principal events of the Queen's reign. The originals of these engravings form part of Her Majesty's private collection. The "Marriage of the Queen," by Sir George Hayter; the "Christening of the Prince of Wales," by the same artist; the "Queen Receiving Louis Philippe," by F. X. Winterhalter; the "Marriage of the Princess Royal," by John Phillip, and the "Marriage of the Prince of Wales," by George H. Thomas, hang in Windsor Castle, while the "Queen at Napoleon's Tomb," by E. M. Ward, is at Buckingham Palace. Our other supplement is a reproduction of the painting by C. R. Leslie, R.A., of the "Queen Receiving the Sacrament on her Accession."

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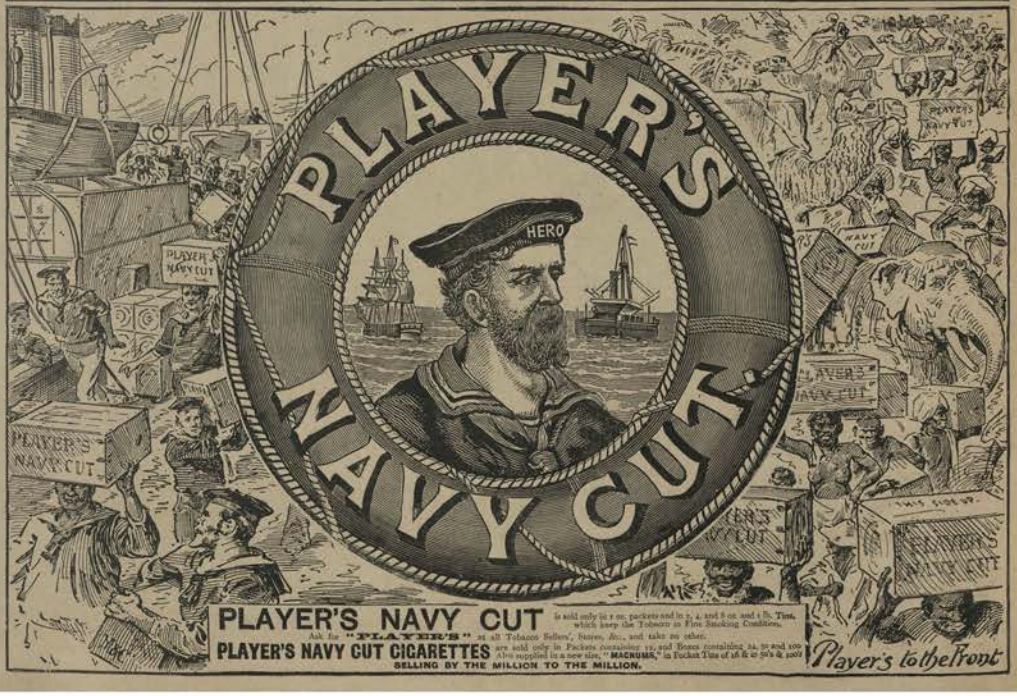

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